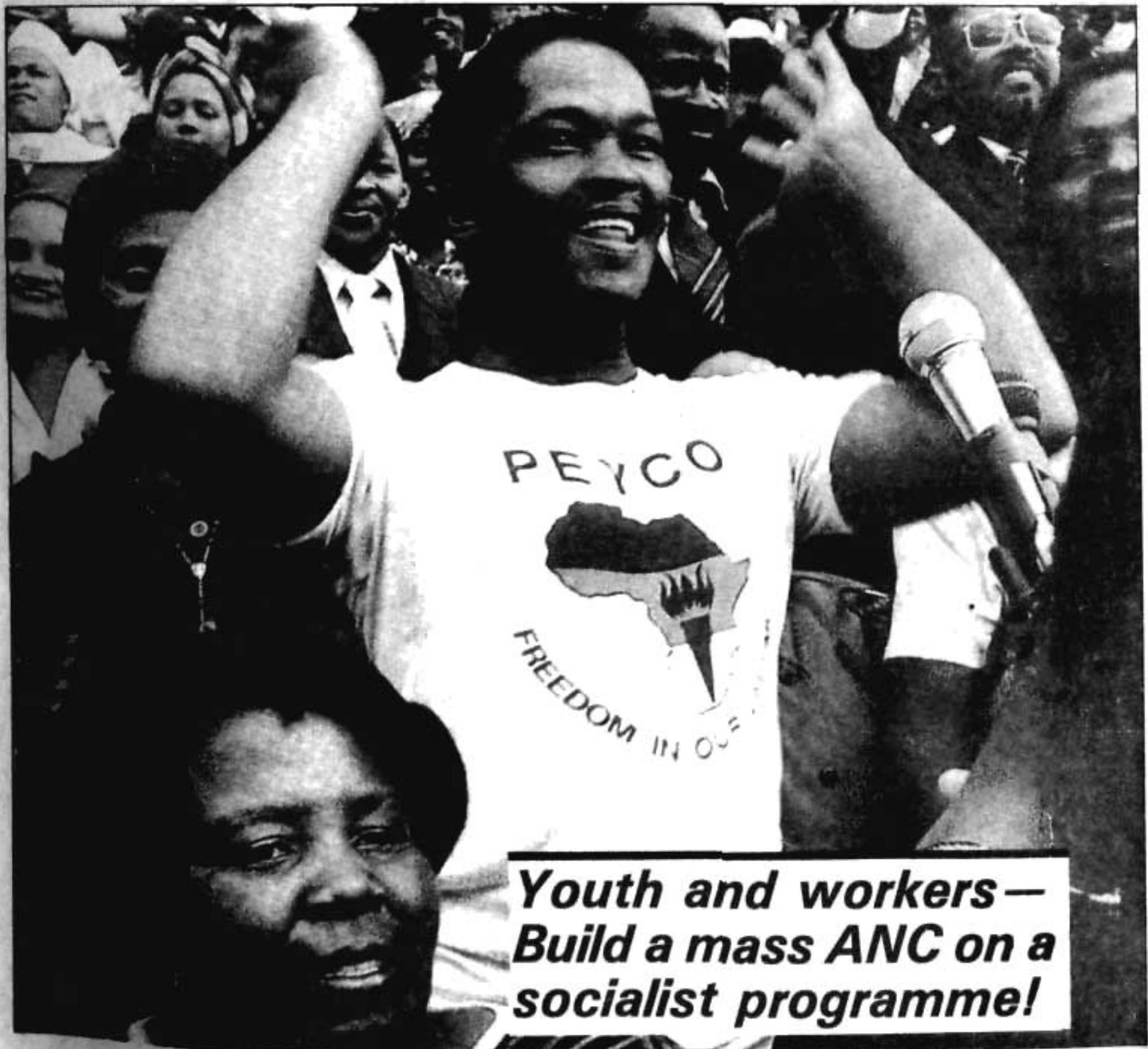


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Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency
of the African National Congress



***Youth and workers—
Build a mass ANC on a
socialist programme!***

COSATU'S FOUNDING CONGRESS

DURBAN,

30 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER 1985



“U—Cosatu—Sonyuka naya ’masingena enkululukweni ...” (COSATU—we’ll rise with you as we advance towards freedom ...)

These words, sung at the mass rally after the congress, tell more clearly than any description what the founding of COSATU has meant to millions of workers and black people.

Never has such a powerful working-class organisation been seen in South Africa. 34 unions, with a paid-up membership of 449 679 were represented at the start. The target is a membership of one million by the end of 1986, consolidated into ten massive industrial unions.

The capitalists have soberly calculated the danger to themselves: “The country’s new super-federation of unions has taken up the cudgels in declaring it will play an intensive shopfloor and political role in

the country. Leaders at the launch ... said members were demanding greater political involvement by unions as a result of mounting social and political pressures” (*Business Day*, 3 December).

Indeed, the resolutions adopted at the congress add up to the most advanced programme in the history of the workers’ movement in South Africa (and will no doubt be developed further in the struggle). The opening words of the constitution link industrial and political

struggle together:

“We the trade union representatives here present firmly commit ourselves to a united democratic South Africa, free of oppression and economic exploitation. We believe that this can only be achieved under the leadership of a united working class.”

These ideas are a challenge to the regime and to its collaborators. Almost immediately after the congress COSATU faced a determined counter-attack. Buthelezi declared war on the federation, and in Bophutatswana the Gencor mining corporation sacked 27 000 workers.

The leadership and activists of COSATU will be urgently discussing the ways of defending the unity now achieved and how to advance.

The resolutions on a number of key questions clearly explain the class



policies that are necessary to go forward. We publish and comment on some of the resolutions in more detail below.

Millions are now looking with new hope to COSATU to carry forward the struggle for workers' power and the socialist goals spelt out by Comrade Barayi at the launching rally.

NATIONAL MINIMUM LIVING WAGE

Seeing that:

1. *The majority of workers in SA are earning starvation wages because of the present economic system, constantly rising prices (inflation) is making what little money workers have worth less and less every day.*

2. *Employers in SA continue to make massive and completely unrealistic profits when compared with employers in other capitalist countries.*

3. *Many millions of workers do not have any minimum wage protection whatsoever.*

4. *The issue of a living wage is one of the strongest points for organising the unorganised.*

We hereby resolve:

1. *That the Central Executive Committee establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage.*

2. *To initiate and conduct—in alliance with other progressive organisations and trade unions in the country—an ongoing national campaign for a legally enforced national minimum living wage for all workers in SA, by amongst other things fighting in every industry through worker action and negotiation for that minimum living wage to be paid by all employers.*

3. *To fight for this minimum living wage to be automatically linked to the rate of inflation.*

4. *To struggle for the abolition of GST on all essential items and worker control over all deductions like pensions and UIF, which are being financed by workers but used against workers by the racist and anti-worker government.*

5. *To fight to open the books of every organised company so that workers can see exactly how the wealth they have produced is being wasted and misused by the employers' profit system, and on that basis can demand their full share of the wealth they have produced. Should the wealth not be there, then it will only prove the inefficiency of employer management and strengthen the case for worker control and management of production.*

Proposed by CCAWUSA.

He received thunderous applause when he delivered a militant ultimatum to Botha "to get rid of the passes" in six months, and "to withdraw the troops from the townships before the country burns". The tremors of this statement are still reverberating throughout the country.

Opposition to capitalism, because of the horrendous life it imposes on the overwhelming majority, was forcefully repeated by the COSATU CEC at their meeting in February.

As a trade union organisation, COSATU cannot carry the whole weight of the political struggle on its own shoulders. But it has an enormous potential political power in its own right and, beyond this, can serve as a fortress from which can arise a mass ANC on a socialist programme with the strength to overthrow the apartheid regime.

The question now before activists is how COSATU's programme will be carried into practice to build the trade unions and the workers' strength. A programme can remain a piece of paper, or it can be a real guideline for the life and activity of the organisation—giving voice to workers' real aims, and showing how these can be achieved.

What tasks does COSATU's programme place before the movement?

A national minimum wage

*My children are dying too
Look at them
how dull their eyes
how slow their walk and the turning
of their heads
Nothing for them to eat
Can you hear?
They are crying.
—Fosatu Worker News,
November 1985.*

These lines by Nise Malanga of TGWU, reflect the horrors of the cheap-labour system.

"Cheap labour" sums up the central purpose of apartheid. It is the key to the capitalists' profitability. The struggle to end cheap labour—to enforce a living wage—attacks the roots of the whole system.

The resolution on a National minimum living wage shows very clearly how to take up this struggle.

Workers are looking to the CEC of COSATU to set the specific minimum wage demand as soon as possible. Action around this demand can attract hundreds of thousands of unorganised workers into the COSATU unions—just as the ranks of SACTU swelled in the 1950s around the struggle for '£1 a day.'

There is one point in the resolution which, we think, is not formulated correctly and could lead to misunderstanding. Paragraph 2 talks of employers in SA making "unrealistic profits when compared with employers in other capitalist countries".

Presumably by this the resolution means that the capitalists are making higher profits in SA, and therefore could be paying higher wages without becoming unprofitable.

It is true that the capitalists in South Africa have the advantage of cheap labour, and the ruthless apartheid dictatorship to maintain it. It is true that in the past this enabled them to get a higher rate of profit than capitalists in most other countries.

But for a number of reasons the capitalists have not been investing fast enough in SA for the advantages of cheap labour to keep them ahead. In fact new manufacturing investment has fallen in real terms by 50% since 1981.

Today the profit system is in crisis—in South Africa and in every capitalist country. Factories are closing and little investment is taking place. South Africa is no longer considered a specially profitable place for capitalists to invest. Many are moving their money out of SA to more profitable areas.

But the workers' demand for a living wage cannot be allowed to depend on the profits made by the capitalists.

It is true, however, that it is easier to get wage increases when the capitalists' profits are increasing—and much more difficult when profits are going down.

Let us look at the experience of the militant car workers of Port Elizabeth. They were able to make huge gains through strike action in 1979-80 when the economy was making an upturn.

But now during the downturn which has affected the motor industry so badly, many workers have been made redundant and face starvation.

The battle of workers for a living

UNEMPLOYMENT

Noting:

1. That under capitalist conditions of exploitation, unemployment is a reality facing every worker at all times.

2. That these unemployed workers are used as a reserve pool of labour by the bosses to keep wages low and to provide a source of scab labour in the event of strikes.

3. That the interests of all workers, whether employed or unemployed, are the same—the right to a job at a decent living wage.

4. That the unity of employed and unemployed workers is essential in the struggle against scabbing and to advance the struggle for the right to work at a living wage.

And further noting:

1. That in SA there are millions of unemployed—a number that is increasing daily through retrenchments.

2. That the introduction of new technology for profiteering purposes is making the whole unemployment situation even worse. This is further aggravated by pressure from employers for higher productivity.

3. That many are abandoning all hope of finding suitable employment in the immediate future.

4. That for thousands of school leavers there is virtually no prospect of getting employment and therefore no possibility of drawing UIF benefits.

5. That unemployed workers are not organised in SA.

Congress therefore resolves to:

1. Fight as one united force to de-

fend all jobs threatened by retrenchments; fight the closing of the factories; and fight for participation in and control over—right from the planning stage—the implementation of any new technology. And fight all attempts by employers to make workers work harder and attempts to rationalise production, because in the present system this always leads to unemployment.

2. Campaign for a 40 hour week at full pay and a ban on overtime.

3. Fight for free and increased unemployment benefits and that these benefits be paid in SA.

4. Fight for a subsistence fund, in addition to unemployed benefits, supplemented by rent, transport and medical concessions for all unemployed workers.

5. Demand that the state initiate a national programme of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed and to improve services and facilities in working class communities.

6. Fight for work-sharing on full pay whenever workers face retrenchments.

7. Establish a national unemployed workers' union as a full affiliate of the new federation to struggle for the realisation of the right of all to work and security.

8. Struggle for a fair, democratic and rational political and economic system which can guarantee full employment for all people in Southern Africa at a living wage.

9. To give full support to efforts by retrenched and dismissed workers to establish co-operatives based on the principles of COSATU.

Composite resolution.

wage, rising in accordance with the cost of living, is inevitably a battle against the capitalist class and their system—and needs to be consciously organised on this basis.

Co-ordinate

It is the task of COSATU to co-ordinate the member unions' campaigns and to ensure that the employers' excuses for not paying a living wage are rejected by the workers.

The resolution, by calling for the companies' books to be opened, and pointing to the need for workers' control and management to replace bankrupt capitalism, shows the way

to a society in which a living wage for every worker can be sustained.

Despite the strength of the unions today, the capitalists continue to slash jobs on every side in order to cut costs, particularly when their profit system is in crisis.

These redundancies spread worsening misery among workers and their families. In the PE-Uitenhage area alone, an estimated 80 000 black workers have lost their jobs during the recession of the last two years. The bosses have used the downturn to inflict defeats on the organised workers.

At COSATU's congress, the Sarmcol workers who served as stewards were a living reminder of the bosses' threat to jobs—and the need to fight back. At Sarmcol the bosses cut back the work force from 4 500 in the ear-

ly 1970s to 1 300 last year—before dismissing the whole black work force when they fought for recognition of MAWU.

The resolution on Unemployment sets out an excellent approach to the struggle to save jobs.

If active campaigns are fought against retrenchments and closures; if whole communities are mobilised together with the workers—it could make it very difficult for employers to throw workers onto the scrapheap.

When retrenchments are forced on the workers, the unions should consider allowing retrenched workers to keep their membership for a period, so that workers in the factories remain alive to the battles which have to be fought.

Organise unemployed

The formation of a national unemployed workers' union is a key to the campaign—organising the hundreds of thousands of youth who have never had a job, and bringing them together with workers made redundant. Such a union will have a particular role during strikes to explain to unemployed workers as a whole the need not to scab.

In the course of such campaigns, the policy and strategy for breaking the bosses' stranglehold and ending the menace of unemployment could be discussed among thousands of working people.

A magnificent example of how to struggle with local general strikes and community support has been set by the Sarmcol workers in the Pietermaritzburg area. By linking together nationally the different local struggles over victimisations and redundancies, COSATU could enormously increase the pressure on the bosses to reinstate workers.

Perhaps the most important objective of the congress was spelt out by Cyril Ramaphosa when he said that the **politics of the working class has to become the politics of all the oppressed people.**

The congress spelt out some of the fundamental policies that workers are fighting for to liberate themselves—and by doing so, to liberate all the oppressed.

It recognised the central role of the migrant labour system in the oppression of the black working class, and



Members of the COSATU Executive.

set out the workers' uncompromising demand for an end to all restrictions on movement.

But even more crucially, the resolution on **Migrant Labour** commits COSATU to fight to scrap the pass laws and influx control—massively popular demands.

Comrade Elijah Barayi's speech at the rally put the question concretely by calling for the passes to be burned if they were not abolished in six months. The ultimatum drew big applause from the assembled workers, showing that the activists are ready to move.

That there could be massive backing internationally for such a campaign was shown when a motion of support was put forward in the British parliament by the Marxist Labour M.P., Dave Nellist, and was immediately endorsed by more than 50 other Labour M.P.s.

Botha has now promised to scrap the *dompas* by July 1 and end the "pass system"—but workers are sceptical whether he will actually carry out this reform. Statements at the February CEC, and the resolution at the NUM conference, reflect that the mood of the activists and rank and file is still for COSATU to take the initiative in an action campaign to force Botha's hand and burn the passes if the July 1 deadline is not met.

The congress thus declared war on the oldest instruments of apartheid domination; it equally rejected the new-style schemes for national oppression and division masquerading under the title of **Federalism**. Instead, COSATU has taken its stand on the revolutionary democratic demand for one-person-one-vote in an undivided South Africa.

The resolution on federalism expresses the rejection by the organised workers of the schemes of every section of the capitalist class—including its so-called "progressive" wing, who know very well that their system would be mortally threatened by majority rule.

Fighting for one-person-one-vote

in an undivided South Africa will place COSATU (like the rest of the mass Congress movement) on a collision course, not only with the apartheid regime but with the whole ruling class. The COSATU leadership now has a special duty to explain, throughout the working class, the class realities which underlie the struggle for majority rule.

The congress showed how widespread is the understanding that *the working class has to lead all the oppressed to break capitalist power and build a new society, democratically ruled by the working masses.*

The issues which the COSATU leadership now have to take up are those posed by Cyril Ramaphosa—the basis on which COSATU unions can join forces with political, community and youth organisations around the democratic and socialist programme of the working class.

As he explained the "workers' political strength depends upon building strong and militant

MIGRANT LABOUR

This federation noting:

1. That pass laws were legislated by the apartheid regime to control and dehumanise the lives of the working class in SA.

2. That pass laws and influx control served to strengthen the hand of capital to exploit and oppress the working class in its endeavour to generate super profits.

3. That the economic and social hardships of the migrant labour system includes the break-up of family life and relationships.

4. That the migrant labour system seeks to further divide the oppressed and exploited workers into permanent residents and migrants.

5. That if the apartheid regime persists threatening to repatriate migrant workers to the homelands and neighbouring countries.

Resolves to:

1. Fight for the scrapping of the migrant labour system including pass laws and influx control.

2. Fight for the right of workers to seek work wherever they wish and to reside with their families wherever they wish and that proper housing will be provided for them.

3. Call for a national strike should the apartheid regime carry out its threat to repatriate any migrant workers.

Proposed by NUM.

FEDERALISM

This Congress noting that:

1. South Africa's bitter history of industrialisation and exploitation has forged one nation.

2. The attempts by the apartheid regime to create and reconstruct separate states and nations which will be combined into some federal system are fraudulent and undemocratic.

3. That the intention of the proposed federal system is to maintain power and control in the hands of the present minority and perpetuate an oppressive and exploitative system.

4. That the demand of all progressive and democratic forces in South Africa is for a unitary state based on One Person One Vote.

Resolves to:

1. To reject as a total fraud the new proposed federal solution.

2. Re-affirms our belief in a unitary state based on One Person One Vote.

3. Work towards the destruction of all barriers and divisions so that we are united irrespective of language, race or creed.

And further believes that:

Only with the total unification of all people into South Africa will we be able to rebuild our rich land and make a real contribution to breaking the chains of poverty and economic exploitation that bind Africa.

Proposed by SFAWU.

WOMEN

This Federation noting:

1. That women workers experience both exploitation as workers and oppression as women and that black women are further discriminated against on the basis of race;

2. That women are employed in a limited range of occupations, doing boring and repetitive work with low and often unequal pay;

3. That due to overtime and night work women workers are subjected to many dangers while commuting;

4. That women workers often suffer sexual harassment in recruitment and employment;

5. That most women workers in South Africa lose their jobs when they become pregnant;

6. That pregnant women often have to work under conditions harmful to themselves and their unborn child.

Resolves to fight:

1. Against all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society and in the federation;

2. For the equal right of women and men to paid work as an important part of the broader aim to achieve full and freely chosen employment;

3. For equal pay for all work of equal value—the value of work must be determined by organised women and men workers themselves;

4. For the restructuring of employment so as to allow women and men the opportunity of qualifying for jobs of equal value;

5. For childcare and family facilities to meet workers' needs and make it

easier for workers to combine work and family responsibilities;

6. For full maternity rights, including paid maternity and paternity leave and job security;

7. For the protection of women and men from all types of work proved to be harmful to them, including work which interferes with their ability to have children;

8. Against sexual harassment in whatever form it occurs;

9. For adequate and safe transport for workers doing overtime and night work.

Now commit itself:

1. To actively campaign in support of these resolutions;

2. To negotiate agreements with companies wherever possible as part of this campaign;

3. To actively promote within its education programme, a greater understanding of the specific discriminations suffered by women workers and ways in which these can be overcome;

4. To establish a worker-controlled sub-committee within its education programme to monitor progress made in implementing this resolution and to make representations to the education committee;

5. To budget for the workings of such a sub-committee;

6. To actively promote the necessary confidence and experience amongst women workers so that they can participate fully at all levels of the federation.

Proposed by CCAWUSA

organisation in the workplace". To be able to carry through bold political campaigns, it is necessary to have the appropriate industrial muscle.

Build a mighty movement!

Despite the big gains made by the democratic unions which were reflected by the buoyant mood of the congress, still bigger tasks face the movement. The campaigns on the national minimum wage, for jobs, and the struggle against the pass laws, will attract many unorganised workers to COSATU.

But the workers will also expect that progress should be made on the crucial question of merging the 34 different unions into 10 strong industrial unions as early as possible

this year. This is an organisational task which has to be pursued forcefully by the COSATU leadership with full backing from the members.

Strong unified industrial unions will not only increase the effectiveness of industrial struggles, but also the mobilisation of workers for political actions.

Many hundreds of thousands of workers, organised and unorganised, support the UDF. But most of the trade union leadership hesitated to take their forces into the UDF and establish there a clear working-class programme and leadership.

As a result, the working-class youth emerging as a socialist vanguard within the UDF have not received the backing they hoped for from the workers' organisations. That must now be remedied.

The decision by the February CEC

to initiate discussions with the UDF opens the way to this, and can be taken up by COSATU organs at all levels.

A firm proposal by COSATU for a united front on a specific action programme—e.g. for a national minimum wage, defence of jobs, against the passes, for the release of political prisoners, for unbanning of the ANC, etc—would help to focus the energies of the youth and draw the widest sections of the working class into these struggles.

On this basis a call could also be made to CUSA and other unions remaining outside COSATU to join the campaign. Either these leaders would have to join with us in a common struggle or expose before their members an unwillingness to fight for their interests.

International links

Through COSATU the working class has "never before been so powerful and so poised to make a mark in society", as one of its leaders said.

This has also been recognised by the ruling class. They do not want to allow any breathing space for COSATU's challenge to be consolidated. Already, since the congress, the blood of trade unionists has been spilt in cowardly attacks by Buthelezi's thugs and lumpen police gangs.

This makes all the more urgent the discussion of strategy—and also of COSATU's links with the working class internationally.

Understandably there has been unhappiness over the prospect of affiliation to any of the international trade union bureaucracies which claim to represent the workers. The alternatives presented seem to be between the pro-capitalist 'free' trade union officials or the Stalinist bureaucracies which were shown in Poland to represent nobody except themselves.

The only way in which genuine international solidarity can be built is on the same foundations as in South Africa—through links at all levels, on a firm policy of workers' democracy and upon the common aspiration of workers everywhere to end oppression and exploitation through the transformation of society. ■

Build a mass ANC on a socialist program!

The fiery movement of 1984-5, still unquenched, has revealed to the black working class (and to the world) its own giant potential as a revolutionary conqueror.

We have seen the inability of the regime to crush the revolutionary movement by brutal repression. In the political turmoil of 1986 we can see, and will see revealed more clearly, the incapacity of the ruling class to avoid revolution by 'reform', negotiation and deceit.

A central task of militants in this period is to hammer this home in the consciousness of the masses, as it is brought to light in day-to-day experience.

Revolution is not a single cataclysm, but a protracted series of battles inevitably interspersed with lulls; hard-fought advances mixed with phases of stalemate, setback and even defeat. Through the whole uneven process, the crisis of the old society deepens, rotting its defences; the bearers of the new society learn, prepare and assemble the forces capable of a decisive victory.

In South Africa, with the regime and its firmly-based state of white supremacy so formidably difficult to overthrow, this process is likely to extend over 5, 10 or more years.

What are the main features of the present phase?

Eighteen months of spreading township-based insurrections (reviewed in an article on page 16), where the youth have pitted themselves almost bare-handed against the unyielding armoury of the state, have resulted, at least for the present, in a stalemate of the forces facing each other on that terrain.

Viewed country-wide, it must be acknowledged that the former momentum of mass action in the townships has ebbed. Yet fierce eruptions of resistance continue in many areas.

Tens of thousands of activists, especially youth, remain ready to confront the police, and are organising without let-up at local level. A solid basis of street committees, previously widespread only in the Eastern Cape, is even now spreading through other regions.

Youth Congresses are taking root in the most isolated localities. School youth, undeterred by the ban on COSAS, are rebuilding their organisations and cementing links with working youth.

The launch of COSATU has raised both the political and industrial confidence of the working class. A wave of intense industrial struggles is in progress, with factory occupations ('siyalala la') coming to the fore. The task of unionising the unorganised into COSATU is a priority for every activist.

The persistent mood of confident defiance—the conviction that time is on our side and that we shall ultimately gain the victory—characterises most of the black working class.

While stepping up the shootings and other attacks on activists, the regime has derived scant political advantage from the stalemate. So far, reaction has only edged forward.

Botha has felt compelled, without delay, to retreat further into promises of political and social 'reform'—on the pass laws, on citizenship, on the "national statutory council" supposed to incorporate African collaborators by invitation into central government and counter the overwhelming demand for majority rule.

So transparently devious are the regime's manoeuvres—so universally distrusted have its promises become—that if Botha handed out R10 notes people would assume them counterfeit.

The regime is driven increasingly to make concessions. Yet

every measly concession it can make is too little and too late.

Its dilemma is shown over Nelson Mandela's release. Continued imprisonment of the ANC leader—supposed to isolate him from the people—now constantly inflames their anger and highlights his jailers' isolation instead.

Yet to release him into South Africa with the lava of resistance still hot, fills the regime with fear of the tremendous mass eruption that this concession could provoke. So they prevaricate still, hoping that the movement can be dampened down sufficiently, or a formula agreed, to allow for his release.

In this, a relatively simple matter to resolve, the impasse of the regime is summed up.

Both the fact of Botha's 'reforms' and their contemptible emptiness are the result of the unconquered power building up in the black working class. The ruling class cannot rest on racist repression alone. But neither can it concede any genuine democracy, for fear that its power and property will be wrested from it.

Votes for all would "end investment" in SA, Finance Minister du Plessis advised the House of 'Representatives' (*Cape Times* 12/2/86). "One man, one vote in a unitary state ... will lead to a socialist dictatorship in South Africa," Botha bluntly told *Business Week* (7/10/85).

A crude recognition of the class war underlying the struggle for democracy ... but essentially a correct one. In it the fears of the scheming, smiling liberal bourgeois, with their anti-democratic 'federal' policies, are also summed up.

They all hate the dictatorship against capital—the complete democracy for the mass of people—that would result from the triumph of working-class power.

Just as an insolvent debtor cannot fool his creditors for ever, so political bankrupts also come to the end of the road. While he may contrive to obscure the fact for a time, Botha's strategy of step-by-step constitutional adaptations, designed to draw black middle-class 'leaders' into the maintenance of the system, now lies in ruins.

The uncompromising nature of the black working-class movement, and nothing else, has brought this about.

Inescapably, the first concern of South Africa's State President is to defend the dictatorship of capital against the black working class by maintaining the efficiency of the military-police machine. This is built on white domination and cannot be fundamentally reformed. Only a revolution can shatter and dismantle it.

Botha is unable to concede any real power to the people. He is compelled to use with unrelenting ferocity the racist state machine. He has to placate white racism to hold the state together, and avoid the growing challenge from his right. The tricameral fiasco rejected by all black communities, the corrupt stooges in them figures of public loathing, he can now produce only the most ludicrous constitutional tinkering in his attempts to offer the black masses an 'alternative' to revolution.

Within days of 'Rubicon II', Botha had to repudiate his sidekick Pik for the merest suggestion that a black might one day become President. Even Buthelezi, impatient for a seat in the oppressors' central government, had to back away hastily from the 'national statutory council' fraud.

Now even the surviving councillors of the West Rand Councils' Association—creatures of the regime's own earlier, discredited and half-demolished scheme of 'reform'—have themselves rejected Botha's invitation to participate in the 'national statutory council' and declared a 'boycott'!

"We refuse to allow ourselves to be seen to be competing with national political leaders and organisations," they said, feeling the fires at their feet. "Political leaders are in jail, exile and detention and some are dead. The leaders of the people shall and will reserve the undisputed right of political participation" (*Cape Times*, 13/2/86)

The ingredients are now present for a renewed political crisis within the NP regime, and in white politics generally. Both the

Nationalists and the PFP opposition are ridden with infighting and incipient splits. This is an indication that neither possesses a coherent or convincing strategy for dealing with the revolutionary challenge of the black working class.

The resignation of Slabbert as PFP leader and as MP has highlighted the bankruptcy of the ruling class's snails-pace 'reform' program based upon the institutions of parliament and the state.

The rise of a revolutionary mass movement of black workers and youth, and the overwhelming gravitation of this movement to the banner of Congress, means that the banned ANC and its imprisoned and exiled leadership are thrust to centre stage in any serious attempt of the capitalists to effect a 'negotiated' rescue of their system.

Slabbert seeks a new role as an extra-parliamentary 'broker' between the ruling class and the ANC. Quite wrongly, the ANC leadership has welcomed him as a friend. Let us not forget that, barely weeks ago, he was discussing secretly with Botha how, together, they might "overcome" the ANC. (*Cape Times*, 20/2/86)

Today, though by a different route, he and his fellow liberals aim still to "overcome" the ANC—to overcome, that is, the revolutionary democratic and socialist aspirations of the ANC's mass working-class support.

The ANC leadership should publicly expose and reject the manoeuvres of all agents of capitalism to ensnare it in the defence of that rotten, tyrannical and exploitative system.

Unavoidably, a protracted process is involved in the movement preparing itself for victory.

We have to build two, three, ten times the strength of Congress organisation among the black working class which exists today. We have to link more effectively the industrial, youth and community struggles on a national scale, under unified revolutionary leadership.

We have to exploit every phase and aspect of the crisis of the racist and capitalist system, using non-racial socialist policies both to unite the oppressed working people in action and to divide the whites on class lines.

As a mass movement we have to gain the means, and develop the tactics, of using arms in the defence of our organisations and communities against 'vigilantes', Inkatha impis, and the police and army.

Only by this painstaking route can we eventually disarm politically and then forcibly conquer the SA state.

Failing to grasp this reality of our struggle, the ANC leadership throughout 1985 proclaimed as the task an immediate Iran-style insurrection and head-on attack on the state to capture power. That did not and could not eventuate.

Now that the necessary, essentially defensive uprisings within the townships have reached stalemate with the state—now that the road to revolution seems barred again by the formidable armoury of white power—the ANC leadership, without explanation, has swung to a new but no less mistaken tack.

As we go to press, comrade Thabo Mbeki, ANC publicity director in Lusaka, is reported as saying: "We are talking not of overthrowing the Government, but of turning so many people against it that it would be forced to do what Ian Smith had to do"—namely concede majority rule! (Reported by Allister Sparks in the *Observer*, 2/3/86.)

For this purpose the leadership is striving to achieve a "realignment of forces" on its side, including businessmen and even "homeland leaders" (among them the Kwangwane puppet dictator and 19 of his 'cabinet' who are visiting Lusaka) against the Botha regime.

The ANC leaders should have learned from their earlier disastrous mistake of fraternising with and assisting Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha (see article on page 34).

Any collaboration with stooges of the state, or with capitalist agents of any type, can only serve to disarm the revolutionary

movement of the black working class, which is the only force that can ensure national and social liberation in South Africa.

Our objection is not merely that the Lancaster House settlement in Zimbabwe led to a regime which, while supported by the majority of workers, now represses and controls the working class on behalf of capitalism.

The crucial point is that, in South Africa—an industrial and military power with a privileged white population five million strong—the racist state will not be "forced" to accept majority rule as in Zimbabwe, but will serve as the bastion for a vicious reaction that will drag the country through civil war before it is overthrown.

The SA capitalists, compelled to choose between the state and revolution, cannot and will not break with that power which, in the last analysis, secures their property and profits.

The pursuit of 'negotiated settlement' in South Africa—the hope for a 'democratic compromise' with capitalism—is a delusion which can disastrously weaken our movement, and lead to the unnecessary sacrifice of many thousands of lives of black workers and youth, who should be armed politically and physically for revolution.

The task before our movement in the period ahead is clear. It is to prepare the way for the conquest of state power by the black working class—for the democratic and socialist revolution bound together.

The priority now is organisation, organisation and again organisation.

As in the past, a combination of industrial struggles, specific political campaigns and community struggles over rents, transport, education, etc, will be the vehicle for mass mobilisation and involvement—and provide the context for revolutionary consciousness to be raised.

A united front of COSATU with the UDF, on a clear program of national action, can give to these campaigns a far greater effectiveness than ever before. This will demonstrate to the working class its immense potential political power once mobilised and united nationally.

We must meet the target of one million members for the COSATU unions during 1986. We must strengthen and extend the Youth Congresses, linking them together and preparing the launch of a national Youth Congress which cannot be crushed.

We must build country-wide the network of democratic street committees pioneered by Matthew Goniwe on the pattern of the M-plan. Linked to the youth organisations, to the civics and to the local union committees, these will form the foundation, not only for sustaining the struggle under the worst repression, but for the exercise of working-class political power.

Here too lies the basis for carrying out the foremost task of this period. It is to build the ANC itself inside the country, as a mass organisation—under working-class leadership and control, locally, regionally and nationally—fighting on a clear socialist program.

We demand the unbanning of the ANC and all banned organisations. We demand the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, and the freedom of exiles to return. We must fight to back up these demands upon the regime. But we should not leave it at that.

Already, through the building and survival of the UDF, through the Youth Congresses, through the street committees, through the launching of COSATU, through the raising of the ANC flag everywhere at the head of the movement, the regime's banning of Congress has been proved unenforceable. It is time to take the next step.

Let the ANC itself 'return'! Let it rise now as the mass political organisation of the black working class. We have the power to build it, and in so doing transform it into an effective instrument of revolution. The task rests on every activist.

Workers and youth!

Build a mass ANC on a socialist program!

Workers and youth!

Organise round COSATU's ultimatum to Botha:

"SIX MONTHS TO SCRAP THE PASS LAWS—OR THE PASSES BURN!"

Inqaba Editorial Board Statement, 2 December 1985

The launch last weekend of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) brings under one banner 34 non-racial democratic unions with over 500 000 members.

This historic advance is of far wider importance than the strength and solidarity which it will add to the industrial struggles of the workers. After twelve months of heroic countryside insurrection in the townships led by the black youth, the black industrial workers are determined to unite in action at the head of the movement against the murderous apartheid regime.

Fighting spirit expressed by COSATU president

The fighting spirit of the workers was expressed in the speech of Elijah Barayi, vice-president of the SA NUM and now president of COSATU.

Described in the press as "a stalwart of the African National Congress before it was outlawed," comrade Barayi "spelt out the Socialist aspirations of COSATU" and declared the workers' intention of nationalising the mines and big businesses on taking power. (*Guardian*, 2/12/85)

Ultimatum to Botha regime

He delivered a militant ultimatum to Botha, drawing thunderous applause from the 10 000-strong rally:

"COSATU gives Botha six months to get rid of passes. If that does not take place we will burn the passes... I want to give P.W. Botha a last warning to get rid of the pass laws and to withdraw the troops from the townships before the country burns."

If carried into effect in a full-scale national campaign, this ultimatum can provide the focus for the entire mass movement in the period ahead, and help lift union membership towards the million mark.

COSATU, together with the youth, in a united front with the UDF, must back up the ultimatum with organisation and power!

Break the stalemate with this campaign!

While thousands of activists in SA still show themselves tireless in battle, below the surface the mass movement has begun slightly to recede (despite continued eruptions), because of the difficulty of carrying the insurrectionary movement in its present form beyond the flaming township streets.

Prolonged stalemate has meant the state gradually (if only temporarily) regaining the upper hand.

The resulting frustration of the fighting youth had begun to open a dangerous rift with unions slow to move into political battle.

A COSATU-led campaign to smash the pass laws can now provide a way forward—within the scope of the force presently in the hands of the black working class.

The pass system can now be completely wrecked

In May, alone at that time, *Inqaba* urged: "... were there now to be a really determined, well-organised and resolutely led mass campaign of pass burning, the complete defiance of influx control laws, and attacks on pass courts and records offices, this system could be thoroughly wrecked. However, to the extent that the matter is left to the ruling class to decide, it is most unlikely that they could move to the abolition of these measures." (Supplement, issue 16/17, p.23.)

In a *Memorandum on Strategy* (11/11/85), which was given limited circulation in South Africa, we argued for united action between the unions and UDF organisations in "an action campaign to cripple now the entire operation of the pass laws".

Now the COSATU rally proves that this call is fully in tune with the mood of the organised workers. The COSATU president has set six months for Botha to scrap the pass laws—or the passes burn.

This presents huge difficulties for Botha

The regime faces a dilemma. The big bosses and even the President's stooge Council have recently declared in favour of ending passes. This is because the pass system is breaking down and no longer doing the job of controlling workers as it used to. So the ruling class thinks 'on balance' it would be better to drop passes as they only provoke black people.

But abolition has not taken place because most bosses fear to do this in the middle of a tide of revolutionary mass struggles. **The regime fears to give a signal of weakness to the blacks.**

Now Botha must decide: surrender in humiliation to the ultimatum of COSATU, or throw all his force at the unions in a situation, and on an issue, which divides the ruling class and the whites and could potentially even split the troops.

Whether we can inflict a severe setback on the regime, and rouse the movement to greater heights, depends now upon the leadership given by COSATU.

COSATU must name the date for the passes to burn!

The ultimatum has been given. The workers have endorsed it with their response to comrade Elijah Barayi's speech. The political prestige of COSATU now depends on carrying this ultimatum into force.

To show their clear intention of doing that, the COSATU leaders must now **NAME THE DATE FOR THE PASSES TO BURN!**

An active campaign of preparation is needed

Once the date is set, the whole movement can immediately turn its attention to an active campaign of preparation for the day of pass-burning. The dangerous (and potentially violent) divisions between youth and trade union workers can be healed at once. The frustrations of the youth at the stalemate with the army and police can be turned to concrete political tasks, and courageous fighters not wasted in suicidal acts of desperation which could otherwise take place in this period.

By naming the date, the COSATU leaders can also prevent the self-seeking sectarians at the head of AZAPO, the National Forum, the remnants of anti-COSATU unions, the multitude of middle-class 'left' grouplets, etc., from wrecking the unity of the working-class movement by 'proclaiming' their 'own' pass-burning campaigns. If they try to 'jump the gun' with an earlier date, this will be seen as wrecking and they will be rejected.

Naming the date will help protect the leadership

Once the date has been set, and general guidelines for campaign action have been given, the COSATU leadership will be in a much stronger position to resist the menaces of the Botha regime.

Once the word is given, the implementation of the campaign can be undertaken by the many organisations and structures within the unions, among the youth and in the communities, which the regime cannot readily crush. This will help to safeguard

the national leadership from arrest.

The watchword should be: *"On the stated day the passes must burn. No-one may call the action off, except the COSATU leaders themselves."*

Surely only exceptional circumstances would induce the COSATU leaders to step back from their own ultimatum. Certainly, they would not call the action off from inside prison!

That fact can provide some protection for the leadership in this situation. Botha will hesitate long before jailing the leaders of COSATU in any event. Now he must be faced with this dilemma also. It can be done only by naming the date.

Which date should be set for the passes to burn?

May Day would have been a good choice, but is only five months away. May 31 is the 25th anniversary of the white racist Republic. Better still, June 16 is the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprising. What better acknowledgement of the youth's role than to set this date for a one-day national general strike and mass pass-burning in the townships?

Whatever date, the key thing is to publicly set it now!

Every pass must burn!

How many passes are there in South Africa? Ten million? Then ten million passes must burn!

This will require a huge campaign to organise—bigger even than the successful boycott campaign around the new constitution and puppet parliament elections in 1984.

The 500 000 COSATU members, the tens of thousands of youth activists, the women at home—all should become campaigners now to prepare the day when the passes will burn.

It should be a campaign of organised discussion and persuasion of working people up and down the country, to explain the necessity and correctness of this step and build a mass momentum for pass-burning.

What if the army attacks the townships?

Preparations should be made to defend the townships on that day by all available means against police and troop attacks. It can be made very difficult and costly for these murderers to disperse mass pass-burning rallies. The youth have a lot of practical experience in street-fighting tactics now; the workers can add their own strengths and skills learned in production, by joining in.

Even if mass rallies are dispersed, it would still be possible to organise the pass-burning systematically, day or night, street by street.

A one-day national general strike on that day will be essential to concentrate all the forces of the black working class on the townships and ensure that the pass-burning is total.

What can coloured and Indian workers and youth do?

Just as African workers and youth played a big part in the election boycott campaign, coloured and Indian working people can do the same now, through the unions and the UDF youth and community bodies.

The pass-burning campaign could also be linked with actions to compel the resignation of the puppet MPs.

On the day itself, workers and youth in these communities should be prepared to join the strike action and to erect barricades in their townships to draw army units away from the African townships.

Mobilise white youth and students also

A big part of this campaign should be to divide and demoralise the whites, especially the troops on whom Botha will rely.

It can be explained clearly that they are being called on to massacre black people for the sake of defending a pass system which the President's Council itself has denounced!

They are being used to protect the prestige of a rotten capitalist dictator, who has no policy and no solution to offer the people of South Africa, but is intent on driving the country deeper and deeper into crisis and bloodshed.

By pointing to the democratic power of the non-racial trade union movement, headed by COSATU, the class issues and a socialist way forward can be explained especially to white working-class youth. Raised as they are in privilege, and soaked in prejudice, they have not yet understood that their own salvation lies ultimately in going over to the side of the black working class.

On the day set for pass-burning, white students should be mobilised to converge on the African townships in order to complicate the position of the police and troops in opening fire. Difficult though this will be, they can also help in appealing to the young soldiers to defy their officers.

Use this campaign to unite the revolutionary youth

A nation-wide action campaign to prepare the destruction of the pass system can provide the basis to unify the youth movement on a national scale, and build one National Youth Organisation, linking it effectively to the unions.

A massive effort to organise the unemployed can also be undertaken by COSATU, together with the youth, in conjunction with the pass campaign.

This campaign can be used to weaken Buthelezi

The COSATU conference and rally was held in Durban to confront the bantustan collaborator Buthelezi on his home ground and defy his Inkatha thugs who had previously driven the UDF out of key parts of Natal. Sacked BTR strikers mounted security in a significant demonstration of workers' self-defence.

Buthelezi has now attacked COSATU verbally. But he is badly miscalculating if he imagines he can defeat the unions in a serious struggle. His own former supporters among the Zulu workers can rapidly turn into his most ferocious opponents.

A vigorous COSATU-led national campaign to prepare pass-burning will force Buthelezi's hand. If he is foolish enough to throw his forces into action against the unions for the defence of the pass system, this hiring of the boss class will stand nakedly exposed in front of the workers.

Conservatives in unions may try to block campaign

Within COSATU unions, there will be conservative elements who are horrified by what they see as the 'political danger' to the survival of the unions if COSATU goes into head-on confrontation with the government.

They do not understand that the workers, now that they are organised in such large numbers, have to use their trade union organisations as effective weapons also in the struggle for liberation.

We live in dangerous times—that cannot be avoided. A policy of political passivity within any of the major unions now would be the surest way of weakening it also in the harsh industrial struggles ahead.

Conservatives in the unions will want to pretend that the COSATU president never issued the ultimatum to Botha! They will hope it gets forgotten. They will try to confine COSATU's politics to verbal declarations. Their influence must be opposed.

An ultimatum with teeth

The Commonwealth heads gave Botha 'six months' to change apartheid, or face sanctions. That is a 'dog with rubber teeth', as workers say.

The COSATU ultimatum is different. It has real teeth, and they must be used or the enormous hopes placed in it will be disappointed. Either this situation will be used to inflict a defeat on Botha, or the regime will use any retreat from the ultimatum to weaken COSATU.

Inqaba supporters in the unions and youth organisations should immediately give active support to the magnificent political stance and bold ultimatum to Botha by the COSATU leadership. This must now be translated into concrete action.

We must urge that mass report-backs in all the cities and towns on the COSATU conference be organised and used to launch the pass campaign without delay.

MEMORANDUM ON STRATEGY

circulated to some activists in South Africa by the
Inqaba Editorial Board on 11 November 1985

1. In evaluating strategy, beginning with the **general** situation, it is essential to recognise that a turning point has taken place. Despite the continued explosions of heroic resistance by the youth in many townships, despite the supreme tenacity, e.g. of the rent strikes and boycotts in many areas, we have passed the peak of the **present cycle** of the mass movement against the state.

The South African revolution will develop through a *series of such cycles*, extending over five, ten, or more years—and involving civil war—before the necessary conditions for the overthrow of the state have fully matured.

Now the movement has come up against the apparently 'immovable' obstacle of the formidably powerful white-based state machine, and finds that even a generalised insurrectionary movement in the townships virtually countrywide is not enough to shift it. The regime for its part stakes its authority ever more clearly on brute state violence, giving at this moment an entirely subsidiary role to so-called 'reforms' among its armoury of weapons and devices designed for taming the black working class.

Because there is no **short-term prospect** of a breakthrough against the state by the revolutionary forces, and as the reality of the stalemate between the opposing forces (of the masses and the state) sinks into the consciousness of the working class, inevitably there will be a **relative** cooling of the movement for a period and thus the advance of reaction (however temporary, unstable and ridden with contradictions that may be).

Temporarily, the ruling class will regain the upper hand. However, the phase of reaction now opening is unlikely to be severe enough to crush and devastate the movement or have in any way a parallel effect to the 1960s.

This is above all because of the enormously deep, widespread and sustained revolutionary ferment that has taken place and because of the strength of workers' and youth organisations that have been built up—now reflected in the creation of COSATU, a huge achievement.

It is also because of the weakness of the black middle class and of forces of potential reaction among the blacks; because of the virtual elimination of the state's collaborator and informer network in the black communities; because, in short, of the **racial** polarisation of South Africa overlapping the deep class polarisation; because of the crisis and divisions among the whites; and because of South Africa's problems in international relations.

All these conditions also ensure that the very ebb of the revolutionary class movement and the relative hardening of reaction will be accompanied by further mass eruptions in the next period. However, these alone would not alter our **general** characterisation of the period itself.

Undoubtedly, probably within a year or two, the

relative lull now setting in will be cut across by a new revolutionary upsurge, at a much higher level than the present cycle.

In the future, when conditions of **outright civil war** characterise South Africa, it is not at all to be ruled out that a really savage reaction, systematically aimed to burn down to the ground all the organisations of the black working people, including the trade unions, could be set in motion. At that point the stark alternatives presented will be the conquest of power by the working class, or the plunging of the country into unrestrained and enormously destructive racial war.

In the present phase, the full might of the state has not been unleashed. Far from it: we have seen only a fraction so far of its ruthless killing powers.

Nonetheless, **now** it should be possible not only for the democratic trade unions to consolidate and grow, but for the youth and community organisations to survive and cement their roots at local level, combining open and underground methods with the necessary flexibility. This will lay the basis for them rising again—and rising more strongly the more that scientific political ideas and perspectives are absorbed.

Bosses' reformist bleating

2. The anti-government and reformist bleating of the 'liberal' bosses does not reflect any willingness to give up the protective shield of the state's armed forces, for these alone in the last analysis can be relied on to defend their power, property and right to grind the workers in servitude. But they see that, in the long term, repressive force will not be enough. By their search for an agreement with the ANC they hope to snare the Congress leadership into undertaking the defence of capitalism and the control of the working-class movement on their behalf.

However, the diseased character of the economic system has an ever more shattering effect on living standards especially of black workers, youth and unemployed people in the urban and rural areas. It is now hitting even the white workers and lower middle class.

The incurable crisis of capitalism means that the scope for democratic reforms is and will remain hopelessly too limited. The refusal of even the most 'liberal' bosses to consider one-person-one-vote in an undivided South Africa, i.e. majority rule, results from their awareness that their system cannot afford the concessions in wages, houses, transport, education, health and all other conditions which the black working people demand and for the sake of which they so vigorously carry on the strug-

gle for national liberation and democracy. Therefore it requires a revolution to solve the democratic questions.

The most intelligent of the liberal bourgeois know full well that, even were the ANC leadership to agree with them to come openly to the defence of capitalism, that would not suffice to hold the workers back. The bosses need **the state**, with all its murderous capacities, for this purpose.

But how can they retain this state and reach agreement with the ANC at the same time? **Only a complete and naked sell-out agreement would be possible in SA conditions**—but for that very reason, the ANC leadership will be unable to enter into it. To do so would be to lose their popular base and render themselves impotent. **It is the strength which the mass movement has achieved which compels the 'liberal' bosses into "talking" with the ANC leaders; but it is equally the strength of the movement which prevents the ANC leaders from reaching agreement with the bosses.**

In reality, moreover, the liberal bourgeoisie is not a free agent in the process. Depending as it does on **the state** (although it tries to hide that fact), it is inevitably held back also by the bourgeois and white reactionary forces grouped round the state. When confronted by a stark choice between the black workers' revolution on the one hand and ferocious white reaction on the other, the entire boss class must choose that force which defends capitalism. The liberals will let the racists do the dirty work, while trying to disclaim responsibility at every step.

That has been the relationship of the big capitalists with the apartheid state hitherto. That will remain the relationship at least in its essentials.

For these reasons, while there will be constant moves and efforts to reach agreement with the ANC, **an actual negotiated settlement of the democratic question in South Africa (on the lines, for example of Lancaster House in the case of Zimbabwe) is ruled out.**

Nevertheless, time and again, in the turbulent period ahead, the efforts to reach agreement between the ANC and the ruling class will temporarily create confusion, and even division within the mass movement.

The workers' movement must base itself, not on the false perspective of such a settlement that is so much talked of now, but on the necessity of preparing the forces for a victorious workers' revolution if the horrible slaughter and destruction of a racial civil war is to be cut through.

COSATU—a milestone

3. The formation of COSATU is a milestone in the development of the workers' movement. Bringing together the heavy battalions of organised workers, it is the most powerful instrument ever created by the South African working class.

In itself, its birth is a sign of the enormous urge among the workers and the youth to build organisation capable of confronting the power of the whole ruling class and the state.

Within the democratic unions a polarisation has taken place under the impact of the past twelve months of crisis and revolutionary struggles all over the country. There

has, for example, been pressure from the rank and file over the past months for the calling of a two-day national general strike by the union leaders in order to establish the central role of the organised workers in the political struggle.

We see a process of differentiation between right and left, between reformists who have hoped for a stable accommodation and steady progress of the unions within the framework of capitalism and the state, and revolutionaries who see the need for workers' power in industry, society and the state.

The past period has seen a **partial**, but nevertheless clear, shift against the reformists and in favour of revolutionary ideas among trade union workers. The clearest indications of this are shown and will be shown in the launching of COSATU.

However this same period has seen a dangerous split develop between the most advanced revolutionary sections of the township youth, on the one hand, and trade union leaders, shop-stewards and rank-and-file union members on the other.

Absence of workers' party

Every incident will have its own immediate cause and explanation. **But the underlying reason is the absence of a mass revolutionary workers' party capable of giving clear direction, perspectives and programme to workers and youth alike, and a coherent strategy and tactics which alone can provide the basis for revolutionary self-discipline.**

Such a party, based on the one hand on the workplace organisations of the workers and, on the other hand, on the organised youth movement, is the only instrument which would be able to link the unions and the revolutionary youth in a solid bond of united action against the bosses and the state, bridging and resolving the conflicts that inevitably rise between these different forces of our struggle.

The youth now, as they face the bitter frustration of being unable to develop their movement beyond the townships into an effective battering ram against the state, cry out in desperate rage against the failure of the unions to come to their aid and 'solve' this problem with them. They see only the reformist vacillation of many union leaders and tend to turn their anger against trade unionists as such.

But the trade unionists, even the most conscious revolutionaries among them, who oppose and combat the reformists, and who sympathise with the mood of the youth, know that a union cannot undertake all the tasks of the revolution. They know that while the unions must engage in struggle against the state they are by their nature organisations of the daily battle with the employers for better wages and conditions and the protection of jobs.

The struggle of the workers for a decent life cannot in the long term be victorious without the revolutionary transformation of society. Therefore no union can fully do its job while turning its back on political struggle. Nevertheless the essential character of the unions as organisations centring on the daily industrial battle has to be preserved if they are to remain effective. A trade

union, in other words, cannot itself be a revolutionary party.

The inability of trade union organisation to be a substitute for a revolutionary party will be brought to a head in practice as a result of the emergence of COSATU itself. From the organised and unorganised workers, from the youth, the women, the unemployed, etc, huge expectations will be invested in COSATU's potential. The demands that will be placed on COSATU will themselves bring out more insistently and urgently the need for a mass revolutionary workers' party.

Inevitably, the relationship between the youth organisations and the unions will remain a changing and elastic one. The youth will be driven again and again by the limits of their own strength to seek the aid of the unions; the unions will link with or support the youth in this or that common action. But only the creation of a mass revolutionary workers' party on firm foundations can bind the youth and workers' movements together into a single revolutionary force.

More than this: only by means of such a party can the stalemate of forces in South Africa be fundamentally broken, and the white reaction be defeated. Only the power of the black working class, with the unions proving their strength against the bosses, with the organised workers and youth proving their strength politically against the ruling class and with a programme for **workers' democracy** and a socialist policy to end poverty, unemployment and crisis—only this can split the whites on class lines, divide the armed forces, and prepare the way for a victorious armed insurrection of the mass movement against the state.

Orientation to the ANC

4. It is not enough, however, to understand the necessity of the mass revolutionary workers' party. It is necessary to understand how it can be built. Today it is impossible in South African conditions to bring such a party into being simply by the common agreement of the unions, or the unions and the youth organisations together. The formidable obstacles standing in the way of such a development will be appreciated by the activists once they have been fully thought through. It will be impossible to create such a party other than through a clear **orientation** to the banner of **the ANC**.

What the last months have shown conclusively is how, with the entry of the masses into a struggle for control of their lives, they have turned overwhelmingly to what is seen as the most effective banner of unity in the freedom struggle. **Irrespective of the policies of the ANC leadership**, mass support for the ANC is in order to go "Forward to Socialism!", in the words of the funerals etc. slogan.

The task is for the organised workers and youth to work together to build a **mass ANC on a socialist programme**. This strategy alone can maintain the unity of the working class in struggle against the enemy **while at the same time** deliberately opposing and breaking the hold of middle-class Stalinist and reformist leaders who exercise such a retarding influence on workers in the name of Congress.

The ANC must be seen not as something outside South Africa, belonging simply to its established exiled or imprisoned leaders. The ANC must be seen as something for the workers to build, to make their own, to control by their democratic methods, and to proclaim a clear revolutionary programme of workers' power, democracy and socialism.

Who can doubt that, once the advanced workers and youth take up this idea and understand its point, it would be possible very rapidly and with a minimum of division **to construct the workers' party under the colours of the ANC**? That would at once provide a nationwide mass following for a workers' programme, and swiftly permit the establishment of effective workers' leadership over the entire movement now dominated at national level by the petty bourgeoisie.

Ideas of Marxism

5. The ideas which alone, in our view, can provide a guide in the tackling of these tasks, and in the leadership of a revolutionary workers' movement, are the ideas of Marxism—the ideas in fact which have been put forward and are now put forward by the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC and by the Marxist tendency internationally.

But for the first steps to be taken towards the building of a revolutionary workers' party in South Africa under ANC colours, it is **not** necessary that the advanced workers and youth should **first** be won to all the ideas of, or become conscious supporters of, the Marxist Workers' Tendency itself. It will be sufficient at the outset for a layer of workers and youth, in the unions and the townships, to understand the essential tasks. In the course of building the necessary organisation and in facing up to all the problems that will arise, we are confident that Marxist ideas and methods will come to the fore once they are clearly explained.

The workers and youth capable of tackling the task will be those who today understand or can be convinced:

—that **workers' power** and the overthrow of apartheid and capitalism together are necessary to solve the problems of black working people;

—that any **political** compromise struck with the capitalists will be designed to weaken and hold back the struggle of working people;

—that the working class needs its **own** revolutionary political organisation, uniting workers with youth, trade unionists with struggles in the communities, and democratically controlled and led by the black working class itself;

—that the mass of black working people look, and will continue to look to, the ANC for revolutionary leadership;

—**THAT, THEREFORE**, the task is for organised workers and youth **themselves** to build the **ANC on a socialist programme**, to ensure the paramountcy of workers' interests, working-class leadership, and no compromise with the bosses in the political struggle.

6. The creation of such a workers' party, of course, will not be an overnight achievement. But it needs to begin now. The way to begin it is to encourage, within the framework of the unions and the youth movement, under the protection of the strongest and most militant unions within COSATU, careful work of a political nature by which the most conscious and trusted comrades group together in an organised network for political education and discussion of issues and tasks.

In this work, it is likely to be youth and active trade unionists without heavy union responsibilities who will be the most active force. But what will be indispensable will be a commitment to encouraging it—with care but determination—by revolutionary trade unionists.

The links that have been built up between the NUM and youth organisations in the Free State are an example of the kind of environment which can assist this work to go forward.

Inevitably within COSATU various political tendencies will contend. There will be the reformists; there will be those who simply follow the line of the Congress and 'Communist' Party leadership abroad; and there will be black consciousness elements as well—to name only the most obvious. 'Political' organisation of one form or another will be going on. The mistaken ideas and methods of all those tendencies, as well as their rivalries, if not effectively challenged, will weaken and divide the forces of organised workers in the trade unions and throughout society.

Mass force

Therefore it is a matter of urgency to promote among the advanced workers and youth the political tasks we have identified—to build the foundations of a workers' ANC, thus laying the groundwork for the eventual rise of Marxism as a mass force at the head of the SA working class.

Approached in this way there is no contradiction with trade unionism, but instead both political and trade union work will reinforce each other.

7. Previously, we put forward the argument for organised entry of the unions into the UDF, to build and transform it. In the main, the unions have not entered the UDF, and those which have entered have not at all transformed it—although this could easily have been done. The UDF, while remaining viable and vigorous in many local areas, has now been crippled at the top by state attacks. Its ability to sustain or develop open structures of national co-ordination and leadership in the present conditions of mounting repression is thus in doubt. We have to amend our tactical approach and slogans to take account of new realities.

At present we would not press for 'entry' of the unions as such into the UDF, for this will not be seen to be realistic or practical by most trade union workers. This would not rule out a return to our former tactical slogan if conditions change. Now, however, we call for united action on specific issues between the unions and the UDF organisations—for a united front, i.e. of the unions and the UDF.

An action campaign to cripple now the entire operation of the pass laws; a campaign for a national minimum wage, for jobs for all, in defence of the accused in political trials, for the release of detainees and political prisoners—these are some of the many issues which could be taken up.

The issue of the "workers' party" we approach in this way:

"Workers and youth build a mass ANC on a socialist programme. This will be the work of years, but we can lay the foundations now, carefully and securely. Study Marxist ideas and by democratic argument convince your comrades in union branches, shop stewards councils and youth organisations of the need for Marxist policies to make our struggle victorious. Group together the most conscious and trusted comrades, especially in the workplaces, but also in the townships and in the schools. Where this can be done safely, build workplace branches of the ANC. Link yourselves together, from factory to factory, area to area, and eventually region to region. Demand of the ANC leadership: No retreat from the Freedom Charter. No compromise over democracy or workers' rights. For workers' power, national liberation and socialism."



THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE OF 1984-5



In the preface to his masterly *History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky wrote, "The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the intervention of the masses in historic events. In ordinary times... history is made by specialists in that line of business—kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for the new regime.... The history of revolution is ... first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny."

The events of 1984-5 have not been, in the full sense, a revolution: the apartheid regime, though shaken, remains essentially intact. Yet a revolution there has been—measured in the scale and intensity of the movement of black working people. In the consciousness of the black

By Basil Hendrickse

youth and massive sections of black workers, the South African revolution has begun.

The movement of 1984/5 has been characterised above all by the absolutely heroic role of the youth. Ar-

rested; tortured, maimed and murdered in the most cowardly fashion by police and troops on the streets during the day, and by hyenas concealing their faces in balaclavas at night, the youth gave to the UN-declared 'International Year of the Youth' a meaning this impotent body never intended. They achieved in action in 18 months what decades of resolutions declaring apartheid a crime against humanity could never do.

Paradoxically, it is the attacks of the state which forced the youth more firmly and more consciously into the leadership of the movement. The imprisonment of the national UDF leadership, far from halting the movement, brought to the forefront, from the ranks principally of the working-class youth, fresh leadership. This leadership has shown itself far more militant and willing to engage the state in a head-on confrontation and go to the end in this. For this reason, it has been far more capable of awakening to political life the most downtrodden and, hitherto, least politically conscious.

The ruling class, in their own

perverse and barbarous way, have recognised the central revolutionary role of the youth. Youth have borne the brunt of brutal state repression—approximately 80% of those detained, tortured and killed.

Despite the repression and the banning of COSAS, the youth remained undeterred. As one activist said, "ban or no ban, the struggle for a people's democratic education is on. It will be on until our demands are met. And our demands go far beyond our classrooms. We will find a way. It is a matter of changing our tactics, of working out alternatives. Organisations, like leaders, come and go but the ideals and aspirations of the people remain."

Working-class masses

Spearheaded by the working-class youth, the struggles of 1984-5 have confirmed that the South African revolution is and will be a movement of the **working-class masses**.

In comparison with 1976 and even 1980, the level of co-operation in 1984-5 between youth and workers, and the identification of workers with the struggle of the school youth, has represented a qualitative leap forward.

From Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal to Atlantis in the Cape, the youth have carried the flag of organisation. By building not just youth organisations, but community organisations to draw in workers in the remotest towns, by actively campaigning against tribalism as well as recruiting for trade unions of which they themselves are not members—in short by building on the recognition of the decisive weight of the working class in the struggle in SA—the youth helped thousands of adult workers overcome the doubts which marked their attitude in 1976.

In fact, so much has the whole black working class been infected by the revolutionary spirit of the youth that, as one student activist pointed out, "We have grannies and oupas flocking to us saying 'we want to be members of COSAS'. We would have to tell them COSAS is for students." (*Saspu National*, "State of the Nation", Oct/Nov 1985)

The basis for this advance in working-class unity lies above all in the social issues, which have been to the fore like in no other struggle in

South African history. Campaigning on the issues of high rents, bus and train fares, GST, etc., the youth have instinctively used the method of the transitional programme explained by Trotsky. They have campaigned on the basis of explaining that all these vitally necessary struggles can be lastingly won only by uniting them into the political battle for the socialist transformation of society.

In the Vaal Triangle, where the movement found its launching pad, more than 350 000 people continue to refuse to pay rent, despite threats and blackmail.

The high point of co-operation between workers and youth was the successful two-day regional general strike in the Transvaal in November 1984. Organised at the initiative of the youth—and itself inspired by previous youth-initiated stay-aways on the East Rand and in the Vaal Triangle—it drew the workers and the youth together in action as never before.

It is in action, or under the impact of great events, that the masses learn rapidly. In the last 18 months a colossal transformation in class consciousness has taken place.

Never before have the enormous chasms which separate the classes in real life, penetrated so deeply into the consciousness of the working class and, indeed, the rest of society.

A survey by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry in conjunction with the Institute for Black Research, revealed that no less than 77% of blacks favour socialism. Remarkably, this survey found support for socialism to be 70% even amongst Gatsha Buthelezi's supporters—despite Gatsha extolling capitalism as "the best economic system which man has ever devised"! (*Weekly Mail*, 11-18/10/1985)

Troops

Initially, the movement gained momentum from the clashes with the state forces thrown against it. When troops were first sent into Sebokeng and other townships (as *Inqaba* pointed out in a November 1984 *Editorial Board Statement*) this failed to intimidate the mass movement, but rather "enabled the embattled working class to take the measure of

the state's forces more precisely" and thus "to begin to evolve tactics and methods for coping with this new stage."

The sense was that far greater forces of the revolution were still to be mobilised and tested in action against the enemy.

In the face of the most formidable clashes, the movement continued to spread and mount, and was then **sustained** at a peak of intensity far longer, in fact, than even the most seasoned activists could have expected.

This is a decisive indicator that a revolutionary earthquake in the depths of society has taken place.

The first task taken up by the youth was to remove all points of support for the regime within the black townships. What has been achieved in this respect is an important conquest for the movement. Of the 103 community councils planned by the regime, very few are still functioning—the rest destroyed.

Paralysed

More than 30 black policemen have been killed and hundreds driven out of the townships. The network of informers which has had such a debilitating effect on the movement in the past has been virtually paralysed, and in many areas eliminated almost entirely. This will save thousands of lives in the future.

In the Eastern Cape, where the movement has advanced furthest, there developed not only temporary no-go areas for the state's repressive forces, but even embryonic soviets in the form of committees, elected on street and zone bases. Through them, thousands could be summoned to meetings within hours.

At demonstrations, at the funerals, the assembling of the people took on the character of the massing of a proletarian army, its battalions running in formation.

But as the movement systematically dealt with the first and simplest obstacles in its way, the most formidable central task began to pose itself in starker terms: **the state has to be smashed**.

A movement of this scale and intensity would have proved powerful enough to bring down virtually any

other regime. But not the South African regime. In this fact all the problems of our revolution are knotted together.

From the revolutionary onslaught upon it, undoubtedly the government was shaken. But—though the points of support upon which it relied within the black community were extensively crippled—the state remains essentially intact.

The defeat of the community councils, the inability of the state to collect rent: these represent the paralysis of only part of the administrative machinery of the state. Important though this is for displaying to the black working class what power lies in its hands, and important though this administrative machinery is for maintaining the bosses' rule, it does not go to the heart of the question of state power.

The state, as Engels explained, is, in its essence, armed bodies of men—primarily the army, but also the police. It is upon this that, in the final analysis, the capitalist class depends for the defence of their wealth, their property and their rule.

To sustain a reliable state machine, the ruling class depends on a base of support in society.

In this sense the state in SA does not differ from any other capitalist state, including those in the advanced capitalist countries which still conceal their armed defence of the dictatorship of the capitalist class behind the skirts of parliamentary democracy.

What sets the state in SA apart is the racial composition of its social base. It is a state not simply of capitalist dictatorship, but of capitalism basing itself on **white minority domination**.

The armed bodies of men in the SADF—the main instrument for the defence of capitalism—are overwhelmingly white.

The police forces, though increasingly black in the make-up of their ranks, are largely officered by whites and will remain under effective white control.

Around this apparatus of repression, the whole bureaucratic machinery of administrative control is welded together as an instrument of white domination and capitalism intertwined.

The overwhelming majority of whites of all classes regard this as **their state**—even those dissatisfied with the present regime.

The whites may be a minority, but they are a substantial minority of five million. So long as the whites of different classes are cemented together in common allegiance to the present state and system, they provide it with a strength and cohesion without parallel in any country.

Only this explains why the regime has emerged essentially unscathed from the onslaught of a movement which reached insurrectionary proportions in the black townships almost country-wide.

Only this (together with the fact that the movement remained **unarmed**) explains why the state has used only a fraction of the power at its disposal—why the ruling class has not considered it necessary (yet) to deploy tanks, or use helicopter gunships, or aircraft on bombing raids against the townships.

Savagery

Nobody can have any illusions, after the display of state savagery in which babies and the old alike were killed without remorse, that the armed forces would use these methods if called upon to. In 1922, the ruling class did not hesitate even to bomb white residential areas in suppressing an uprising by white workers.

Of course there is a whole complex of pressures, political and economic, nationally and internationally, which deter the regime from resorting at this stage to measures of unrestrained civil war against the black working people. But we must distinguish what is secondary from what is primary. Once the 'chips are down'—with a movement on twice or three times the scale of 1984-5 (which will occur in future)—the level of state violence will escalate beyond anything yet imagined.

The ruling class has held back so far—because the state has not yet been fundamentally challenged in its heartlands—the 'white' centres of industry, finance, and power. In fact, at the first opportunity, once the movement appeared to be "under control", it has resumed its efforts at combining repression with "reforms".

In the townships, the people emerged on the whole the stronger out of the trial of strength with the

state. Yet for the state to be fundamentally challenged, the struggle has to move beyond the townships.

How to do this effectively became the central problem facing the activists—especially the youth. For experience showed that whenever it was attempted to take the **insurrectionary movement of the townships** beyond the confines of those areas, **the balance of advantage swung in favour of the state**.

This was demonstrated in the abortive march on Pollsmoor which was initiated (without prior consultation and discussion in the movement) by Allan Boesak. It was demonstrated also in the efforts of some of the youth to take revenge for police killings by entering white residential areas in order to "take the struggle to the Boers."

The obvious impotence of these ventures, the resulting backlash, and the dangers of demoralisation within the movement which they posed, drove many activists towards a more careful assessment of the real relationship of forces still weighted in SA in favour of the ruling class and state. What tasks had still to be tackled if the relationship of forces was to be changed decisively in favour of the revolution?

Firstly, it is clear that even within the black townships (not to mention the rural areas) vast forces remain to be mobilised in the struggle. In 1984-5 the movement did not yet become, **in full measure**, a movement of the **whole** of the oppressed people.

What to many seems the continuing "invincibility" of the apartheid state, engenders passivity among wide—generally older—layers of the black population. That in turn makes it difficult to drive out entirely from the townships all collaborators and conscious agents of the regime—and enables the regime more easily to re-establish some points of support and control within these areas whenever the movement loses momentum for a time.

Policemen

Thus, for example, while many black policemen may not be able to live in the townships any longer, it is still the case that blacks constitute more than half the police force. There have not been resignations en



Riot police in the centre of Johannesburg on May Day, 1985.

masse. When that happens it will be a sign of a fundamental shift in the relation of forces taking place. Meanwhile the intention of the regime is to increase the numbers of police by 11 000.

The ability of the regime to make use of 'vigilantes' such as the 'A-team' and so-called 'fathers' in the recent period against militants in the townships; the clashes stirred up along tribal and racial lines between blacks in some areas; the remaining hold of Inkatha in large parts of Kwazulu/Natal—these are indicators of the organisational and political conquests which our movement still has to make before a fully mobilised and united struggle of all oppressed people can be concentrated against the state.

To defeat the state will require a far stronger, and far better organised force than the movement has yet built. It will also require methods of struggle going beyond township-based insurrection—methods of struggle by which the full social and organised power of the black working class can be engaged in action against the state and capitalist class.

Moreover, the defeat of the SA state, entrenched as it is with the support of the whites, will depend not only on building the mass working-class movement. A precondition for the collapse of the SA state is the crumbling and disintegration of the ruling class as a result of the deepening economic, political, and social crisis.

This, in turn, will sap the confidence of the ranks of the whites, opening up confusion and division,

weakening the state machinery itself.

The necessary conditions for this are being prepared in South Africa, through the whole process of unfolding shocks, struggles and crises. But it will require still a period of years for all these conditions to fully mature.

The South African revolution will not be won in a single head-on confrontation, however heroic, but through a series of explosive revolutionary movements, extending over five, ten, or possibly more years.

Inevitably the movement will pass through tidal flows and ebbs—periods of gigantic advance followed by lulls and even phases of setback and partial defeat.

This is altogether in the nature of every great social revolution, and all the more so in South Africa, where such immense forces are pitted against each other.

Momentum

To sustain the momentum of the struggles of 1984-5 further, the masses would have had to feel there was the prospect of inflicting at least a wounding blow if not a crippling defeat upon the state.

In the class struggle, nothing remains static. The movement reached a situation of stalemate against the forces of the enemy—undefeated, yet unable to move forward in a decisive way.

Thus, over a period, despite con-

tinuing explosions and confrontations, a turning point has undoubtedly occurred. In the townships, the mood of the masses is no longer at the same pitch of white heat. On a national scale, in comparison with the high points, the movement has begun to ebb.

The imposition of the State of Emergency, in itself, had no more immediate intimidatory effect than did the introduction of troops into Sebokeng in October 1984. The mood of the masses became, if anything, more defiant. Struggle spread uncontrolled to areas not covered by the State of Emergency.

Nevertheless the declaration of the State of Emergency did mark an important change in the political situation. It represented a clear declaration by Botha that the revolutionary movement would be faced down with uncompromising state violence, and that further ruling-class retreat or 'reform' would be postponed or relegated to secondary importance until 'law and order' had been reimposed.

To the extent that the fiasco of the new constitution, the successful boycott of the coloured and Indian 'parliamentary' elections, and the various partial retreats by the regime on apartheid laws had given a signal of its weakness to the masses and so emboldened the movement and aroused new layers—Botha was now concerned above all to convince people of the formidable, entrenched strength of the state. 'There will be no pushover!' That was his message—which was emphasised in the intransigent tone of his August

speech in Durban, the 'Trojan horse' massacre in Athlone, and in a whole accumulation of brutal incidents.

It is the main historical accomplishment of the movement of 1984-5 that it has brought out so clearly **in the consciousness of the masses** that the fundamental issue is no longer **whether** it is necessary to overthrow the state—but **HOW TO OVERTHROW IT**.

Yet, precisely because the movement still lacks at the present time the necessary **strength of organisation, clarity of revolutionary programme and strategy, unity of forces, and firm revolutionary leadership** at national level to carry out this task—precisely for this reason and by virtue of the stalemate of contending forces that set in, a **turning-point** was inevitable and has occurred.

The movement has passed the peak of the **present revolutionary wave**. This turning-point is not associated with any one particular event, but with the cumulative effect of a series of events.

Recent eruptions

This characterisation of the overall situation is not refuted by all the most recent eruptions: Mamelodi, for example, or Alexandra.

Where the masses have entered the arena of struggle later than in other parts, this reveals, on the one hand, the thoroughness of the historical process in preparing ever wider layers of society for participation in the revolution—and, on the other hand, the preparedness of wider layers to stand up and be counted.

At the same time, activists in many areas, feeling the mood of the masses cooling around them, are continuing to engage in heroic clashes with the police—who are seizing every opportunity to crush them by beatings and massacres.

The phase of **relative ebbing** which has now begun will not at all be a period of tranquility. On the contrary, because the turning point has been brought about by stalemate rather than defeat, continued upheavals are inevitable.

But the workers and youth face this period of ebb—as they faced the period of revolutionary upsurge—without the benefit of clearly work-

ed out perspectives. They are compelled, instead, to improvise strategy and tactics "on the wing."

The particularly intractable problem of the SA state could not have been spontaneously foreseen in advance by the black working class as a whole. For the nature and scale of the tasks to be appreciated, the class had to go through the experience of measuring the strength of the state in battle.

However, the point of theory and perspectives is to arm the advanced section of the class, the activists, with foresight and a scientific guide to action—to guard against both utopian expectations and unnecessary despair when the road forward seems blocked by (temporarily) insurmountable obstacles.

The responsibility to guide the movement through the revolutionary events of 1984-5 lay, above all, with the leadership of the African National Congress.

One of the historic consequences of the 1984-5 movement has been the open reassertion by the black working-class masses, on an unprecedented scale, of their allegiance to the banner of Congress as the organisation through which the struggle for national liberation, democracy, and socialism can be carried to victory.

This has been reflected in the sea of ANC flags that are hoisted at the funerals and demonstrations. It has been shown in the naming of all the most important mass organisations that have arisen openly: the Congress of SA Students, the regional Youth Congresses and now the Congress of SA Trade Unions.

This does not reflect a passive acceptance of middle-class predominance in the Congress leadership, or policies of class compromise 'traditional' among this leadership. On the contrary, the aim of the masses is to build on the best of the **working-class traditions** created within the movement itself under the banner of Congress in the 1950s. Nevertheless, it is naturally towards the established Congress leadership that the majority of workers and youth have looked for clarity and direction.

In these conditions, the responsibility of the ANC leadership was to explain the protracted character of the South African revolution, and the reasons for this, and put forward campaigning tasks which would

mobilise and unite the whole movement, and which were achievable with the forces presently at its disposal.

Had the necessary guidance been forthcoming from the ANC, there can be no doubt that the UDF at national level would have acquired a far clearer and firmer direction, despite all the arrests and bannings, and could have drawn the unions, youth and community organisations together in effective national action campaigns.

Guidance

But what guidance came from Lusaka?

At the beginning, the exiled leaders were, by their own admission, caught by surprise by the scale and explosiveness of the struggles. Then, throughout 1985, they made call after call for the launching of an immediate Iran-style insurrection.

But, because of the present resilience of the state machine, such an insurrection was completely ruled out at the **present stage** of the balance of forces in South Africa, as *Inqaba* has explained (See "Workers' Revolution or Racial Civil War" Supplement to No 16/17, May 1985).

With enormous self-sacrifice and heroism, the unarmed youth were already in all-out battle with the state's forces. The reckless calls of the exiled ANC leadership drove the youth further forward—in uncoordinated actions going beyond the force at their command. What they and the whole movement encountered was the insurmountable obstacle of the armed forces of the state, without the means to overcome it.

The youth, feeling all the sacrifices that had been made had not landed the movement the prize of the state, became increasingly frustrated. Beginning to sense the turning-point and the cooling of the masses, the youth looked in desperation for ways to blow new life into the flames of revolt and to give the struggle a new impetus.

To this, as the ebb began, the exiled ANC leadership responded by calling for 'taking the struggle into the homes of the whites'—and into the shopping centres and holiday

resorts.

As if this was where the real power of the state could be found or successfully fought!

As late as November, a "discussion article" in *Sechaba*, was putting forward the position that (in the words of its title) "The moment of the revolution is now—or never in our lifetime." "In the present political climate at home and abroad", it stated, "a month (!) of sustained ... armed action may well prove to be the **abracadabra** (*the actual word used!*) for the dawn of freedom in South Africa."

For the youth looking for a way to take an ebbing movement forward, it is difficult to conceive a more irresponsible perspective to put across. Freedom, needless to say, will not be magically speeded up through the spells of a sangoma, or rhetorical exhortations to action. It requires hard-headed and scientific perspectives and strategies.

At the end of the year the youth themselves began to launch a serious discussion on the strategy to be adopted in the schools during 1986. The advice they received from the ANC leadership was to maintain stay-away from schools permanently, in order to continue the head-on confrontation with the state in the streets of the townships.

The December issue (No. 4) of *Congress Review*, published in the Western Cape, and reflecting the official line of the leadership at that time, maintained that "the racist government has lost all political control over the entire country ... it is unable to govern." Only the bourgeoisie, it continued, "insists that 'revolution is not around the corner.'" Hence the youth must remain away from the schools on indefinite boycott: "Freedom Now, Education Later."

Wisdom

But the youth have shown greater maturity and wisdom than these elders. At a conference on December 28-9, of 161 youth organisations, with 312 delegates and 300 observers, convened by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee, the decision was reached to return to the schools as a body, placing demands on the

government with a three-month ultimatum.

The ANC leadership in Lusaka announced that it accepted the decision of this meeting.

The return to school has taken place nationally. Explaining the reasons, 137 Western Cape organisations released a statement which points out: "While it is true that the apartheid state has never been as weak and open to internal and external pressure as at present, it is a disastrous illusion to believe that the government is on its knees.

"This may not be the popular thing to say, but it is the correct and responsible thing to say. There is no moral, political or educational reason for continuing the boycott of classes indefinitely.

"Indeed, to do so would be like plunging a knife into the heart of our struggle." (Reported in *Weekly Mail*, 31/1-6/2, 1986).

Inqaba supports this position, and *Inqaba* supporters played a role from the outset in putting it forward and gaining support for it within the movement.

Now the youth will remain determined to use the schools as centres for revolutionary discussion and organisation, and to continue the struggle against the authorities—with the option of resorting to a renewed boycott when it becomes necessary.

But it is not only the ANC leadership who were unable to provide the necessary centralised and national direction to the struggle. The leadership of the trade unions also, on the whole, did not respond adequately.

The two-day Transvaal general strike in November 1984 had the potential to be a springboard for further and still more effective action, establishing the organised workers together with the youth, as the driving force and leadership of the struggle against the state.

Unfortunately, however, this potential was wasted.

This is not because the organised workers were not willing to struggle alongside the youth. Trade union members in their thousands have participated in many momentous political struggles in the past 18 months. But on the whole they have not carried with them the banner of the independent trade unions, or brought the full power of the unions to bear within the general mass movement in the townships.

The unquestioned success of the Transvaal general strike lifted the morale and confidence of the working class enormously—and encouraged especially the activists both within and outside the trade unions. Very rapidly, the idea began to spread that it was possible to repeat its success on a national scale.

Every reason for such a national action existed, not only in support of the political and economic demands of the Transvaal strike, but in defence of the 6 000 SASOL workers dismissed as a result of it.

During 1985, on several occasions—after the Uitenhage massacre, for example, and when the State of Emergency was declared—the conditions and the mood for a nation-wide strike recurred. But, on every occasion, the trade union leadership recoiled from it.

Nation-wide

In November 1984, trembling at the prospect of a nation-wide repetition of the successful Transvaal action, the state, using its dirty tricks department, contrived to associate rumours of a national strike with fake leaflets and stickers which it distributed with the theme "Rape a white woman; kill a white child."

Quite correctly, the trade union leadership condemned these leaflets. But at the same time sections of the trade union leadership "disowned and denounced" (*Guardian*, 28/11/84) rumours that a national general strike was being planned!

No doubt there was room for debate in the movement over the timing, the duration, and the demands of a national general strike. But by denouncing the very idea at that time, the trade union leadership missed an opportunity—at that early stage of the struggle, when the movement was clearly still in its ascendancy—for the organised workers to place themselves firmly at the head on a nation-wide basis of the struggles unfolding in the townships.

Not only would a public demonstration of the might of the organised black workers have been important in strengthening the confidence of the workers themselves. The process of organising a national strike, if systematically undertaken,



Striking Sarmcol workers march through Imbali township, Maritzburg.

would have drawn the youth closer to the unions. This could have had a profound influence both in revolutionising the unions' ranks and in infusing the township struggles with greater proletarian discipline.

Boost strength

Equally, the organised workers missed an opportunity to boost the strength of the trade unions themselves, through the increases in membership which would have resulted from a well-prepared national general strike.

Moreover, an opportunity was missed also to demonstrate, in the eyes of the whole of society—and of the white workers in particular—that the black workers are the most powerful political and social force in the country.

This would have made an important contribution towards eroding the confidence of the whites in their traditional representatives in the racist trade unions as well as the government—a confidence already beginning to be undermined by the attacks which the economic crisis is forcing the bosses to carry out against white living standards, by the dithering political policies of the govern-

ment, and by the open revolt of blacks against the regime.

It would have helped to prepare the ground for splitting the whites by more resolute action in the future.

Undoubtedly, from after November 1984 and on a number of occasions in 1985, there would have been a massive response to a call for a national general strike of limited duration. This is shown by the fact that in town after town, area after area, localised general strikes took place: Grahamstown, Cradock, Port Elizabeth, Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town... etc.

Yes, these high points of action were reached at different times in different areas. But the point of a nation-wide general strike, thoroughly prepared and campaigned for, would have been to generalise out of the multitude of local and national grievances a unified national momentum for action rather than leaving each area to take on the regime in its own time in isolation.

One of the arguments used by Thembinkosi Mkalipi, FOSATU chairman in the Eastern Cape, against support for the March 1985 stay-away in that area, was that "the general sales tax and petrol increases were national issues and required a national response." (*South African Labour Bulletin*, September 1985)

Precisely! But it was FOSATU which was best placed to organise—

together with the UDF—a national response on these issues—and others—through calling a national general strike.

Yet, after November 1984, it was only in Maritzburg that the FOSATU unions took the lead in organising general strike action.

Within the ranks of the unions the trade union leaders advanced, from November, various explanations of their unwillingness to prepare a national general strike. These arguments surfaced more openly in the Eastern Cape in March.

Trade union leaders argued that the unions had been "hijacked" into the November action by non-trade union (i.e. community and youth) organisations. They argued that these organisations had no consistent membership, were not accountable to anybody and by implication were irresponsible.

Pride

Undoubtedly these arguments gained an echo because of the justifiable pride which trade union workers have in the solid organisations which they have built over the past decade and more. The degree of democratic control and accountabili-

ty achieved in these unions is the envy of workers in countries with an incomparably longer tradition of working-class organisation. That the workers should want to jealously protect these historic gains is entirely understandable.

Smokescreen

But those who use this argument about "hijacking" and "lack of accountability" against participation of the unions in mass actions with the working-class youth and township communities, are really putting up a smokescreen to defend political passivity among the leadership. If trade union leaders gave clear political direction, and themselves—after thorough democratic discussion, yes, as far as possible throughout the unions—**had initiated action** against the government, who could doubt the willingness of the youth and working-class generally to support it.

It is only when a lack of clear political leadership is manifested in the unions, that any question of political "hijacking" of the membership by other organisations or leaders arises. But is it "hijacking" if the pilot of a plane becomes paralysed and others on board take over the controls to avoid a crash? It is a necessity.

For the masses, including for the mass of **union members**, political leadership is a **necessity**—and if they cannot find it in and through their union organisations they will find it outside.

This was the case, for example, in the Eastern Cape—where trade union members overwhelmingly supported the March stay-away although the trade unions refused to join in leading this struggle.

Underlying the argument about "lack of accountability" is in fact a different argument—that non-trade-union organisations are dominated by the middle-class. The same arguments were used by the same trade union leaders to oppose the affiliation of their trade unions to the UDF.

But really, we have heard enough moans and groans about the middle class! The black middle class constitute a tiny minority within society.

The black workers are 8-9 million strong; the black working class as a whole make up 2/3 of the total population of South Africa.

If there was decisive political leadership forthcoming from the workers' organisations, can anyone doubt that the problem of "middle-class domination" in mass politics could be eliminated with ease?

The trade unions have come into existence against the formidable opposition of the state and of a powerful capitalist class. By putting forward class policies—for democracy and socialism—in a determined way the organised workers are surely in a strong enough position to assert their leadership of the movement as against middle-class politicians—at the same time winning support from most middle-class people.

Confidence

The coming into existence of the trade unions over the last twelve years has given confidence to far wider layers of working people that they are quite capable of organising themselves along democratic lines.

Within the mass youth and community organisations, where they are organised thoroughly at grassroots level, there is constant struggle from below to ensure accountability and control of the leadership. Whenever working-class people rouse themselves to action and enter in force into organisation, democratic methods come to the fore.

It is false to draw an absolute distinction between trade union and community organisations in this respect. Are trade unions **never** and **to no degree** manipulated from the top or dominated by petty-bourgeois intellectual elements? Are community organisations **always** or **uniformly** under middle-class leadership?

Clearly it is **more difficult** in youth and community organisations to establish and maintain a **continuity** of democratic structures and methods, in comparison with unions which have a more **stable** basis in workers **organised at the point of production**.

But for trade unionists to continue to talk glibly of "middle-class domination" of the youth and community organisations is to dismiss the enormous transformation which has

taken place in many local areas and even regions as a result of the revolutionary character of the mass movement in 1984-5. Especially among the youth, the identification of the class issues has increasingly become paramount.

In many local Congress youth organisations, middle-class politicians who argue against socialism or who advocate a 'two-stage' theory are denied a platform. The essential working-class character of the mass community organisations has likewise come to the fore.

If, particularly at national level, middle-class leaders still exercise political influence in the movement out of proportion to the mosquito weight of the middle class in society, this has little to do with 'sociological' differences between community organisations and trade unions. **Its fundamental cause is the lack of a clear alternative provided by the organised working class.**

Thus, in reality, a position which is put forward with the ostensible aim of protecting the organised workers from following the unreliable and 'unaccountable' leadership of middle class politicians—has the consequence that the workers, organised and unorganised, are left vulnerable to such leadership, **because no alternative is being offered by the workers' organisations.**

Into the vacuum thus created have stepped the priests. On two occasions now—it is painful to have to say this—Bishop Tutu has put the trade union leaders into the shade.

Mood

Sensing the mood among the workers for political strike action, and hoping to use it as an alternative to township 'violence' which could be diverted into 'peace' and 'prayer', Tutu took the initiative to call—unsuccessfully—for action on the so-called Day of Reconciliation (October 9th). Now, even after COSATU has been born, Tutu has repeated the threat of strike action in support of the educational demands of the youth movement.

Tutu has got no authority and no 'right' to make these calls. But the way to deal with this is not to wail about "unaccountability", but to

provide instead a fully accountable, clear and unequivocal political leadership through the mass workers' organisations, to the class as a whole—which the mass movement will accept and understand.

The fact that Tutu's calls have not at the present time been supported, shows that the mass of workers are looking to the unions for a lead. But the trade union leaders cannot suppose that this will necessarily always remain the case. If they do not provide a lead, even Tutu can generate support for strike action in the future.

If middle-class leaders are allowed to get away with placing themselves at the head of the movement in this way, serious divisions can open up among the masses—between those feeling the need to follow, and those repulsed by, leadership of this character.

Responsibilities

The trade union movement cannot escape political responsibilities as the revolutionary crisis unfolds. But this does not mean that the forces of the organised workers should be thrown full-scale into every political battle at every moment in time.

As far as possible the ground for battle must be chosen. Preparations must be thoroughly made. And, at times, the ability to call an orderly tactical retreat becomes as important a part of revolutionary leadership as to launch a bold offensive.

In this respect the experience of the NUM, in its confrontation with the Chamber of Mines in 1985, is very useful. The NUM clearly has enormous potential power—more than any other single trade union.

Thus, as the dispute built up, an enormous amount of expectation was generated among NUM activists, trade union members generally, and the youth in particular, that here was the struggle that would bring the organised workers into the forefront of the entire movement and deal a blow against the ruling class.

In the immediate sense, such an all-out strike could have raised the whole struggle against the state to a higher plane, and rallied other forces of the movement to its support nation-wide.

Nevertheless, an all-out strike by

the NUM in 1985 would, most likely, have had the end result of setting the movement back rather than taking it forward.

An all-out confrontation between the most powerful section of the SA working class and the most powerful employer (the Chamber of Mines)—a confrontation involving the fate of SA's key industry—poses a similar kind of challenge to the whole ruling class and the state **which is posed by an indefinite general strike.**

At least to some extent, it puts in issue who has power to rule society. Therefore it is very likely to lead to massive use of repression by the state, if it is not settled by compromise at a relatively early stage.

In 1985, the NUM itself was not yet strong enough in numbers or depth of organisation to enter **willingly** into such a battle **if it could be avoided without severe loss to the union in membership or morale.** Nor, at that time, was the trade union movement as a whole sufficiently united, mobilised, or prepared to give the necessary backing to the NUM.

An all-out conflict would very likely have involved mass deportations of the mineworkers, and possibly the destruction of large parts of the NUM's organisation. Such risks have to be faced **when the alternative is a humiliating surrender without a fight,** for there is nothing more difficult for the workers' movement to recover from than that. But all the factors have to be—and had to be—soberly weighed up.

A severe defeat of the NUM could have set back by several years organisation on the mines (never easy at the best of times), and seriously affected the confidence and morale of the mine workers.

More than this, **such** a defeat in 1985 would have had big repercussions for the whole movement. If the present ebb countrywide had come about through a serious defeat, rather than through a virtual stalemate of forces, the ensuing reaction would have been far deeper and more severe than is now proving to be the case.

In these circumstances the tactics of the NUM leadership—of securing the maximum gains out of the dispute without resorting to an all-out confrontation—have in our view been correct overall.

This is so despite the fact that these tactics involved acceptance of a settlement with Anglo-American only,

so that the minority of workers on other mines struck in isolation and were quickly defeated, without any real possibility of mounting an effective solidarity strike.

Nevertheless, during the build-up of the dispute towards possible all-out action, the NUM leadership could have been much more energetic on the question of encouraging the building of solidarity committees within the trade union movement and in the community at large.

An all-out mine strike could only have had **prospect** of victory in the context of country-wide solidarity action by workers and youth—culminating in a national general strike.

To prepare the ground for this systematically should have been a top priority of the NUM leadership. And in such a situation, reliance on the maximum **initiative** locally (**within clear guidelines centrally laid down**) should always be encouraged, so as to mobilise the energies of the youth, the shop-floor activists in other unions, and so on.

It is usually a mistake to attempt—as the NUM leadership did—to establish administrative control over all solidarity efforts through a small central body. This can only have the effect of stifling the local initiatives which are vital for success.

In particular, the huge potential of support from the Congress youth organisations, rallying under the banner of the UDF, was not tapped.

Outcome

Nevertheless, even many activists who regarded the outcome of the dispute as a defeat at the time, may now weigh up matters differently. From the point of view of the NUM, the major concessions won from Anglo represented a substantial victory—outweighing, on balance, (and for the time being) the setbacks suffered on other mines. From the standpoint of the movement as a whole, the strength of this key union has been preserved for coming battles.

The preservation of the forces of the NUM has allowed the union to play a decisive role in bringing COSATU into existence—thus establishing a far stronger bastion of protection for the movement in the



Mineworkers at the NUM special conference, June 1985, vote for strike action.

present period of relative ebb.

All these advantages should now be consciously used in systematic preparation for the next inevitable conflict with the mine bosses. It will not be possible to avoid indefinitely a large-scale battle on the mines. Possibly even this year, the full forces of the NUM will have to be launched into action—and that will need the solid backing of every section of the movement to see the struggle through.

Main point

But to return to the main point: the failure of the trade union leadership as a whole to mobilise for a national general strike of limited duration **during the whole period of nation-wide revolt in 1984-5** produced definite negative effects.

On the one hand, the state has not been made to feel the full power of

even the existing strength of the working class—and has sustained an unwarranted degree of confidence because of this.

On the other hand, the whole movement is only too painfully aware that event after event has been allowed to pass by in which the power at the disposal of the unions was not deployed in answer to the provocations of the state.

The youth in particular feel bitterly and justifiably frustrated over this. It is the reason why the potential for a disastrous and dangerous split between the youth and the organised workers opened up—to the extent that in the Eastern Cape youth threatened to burn down the houses of workers who did not respond to a call to occupy their factories.

It would be an absolute disaster if the youth thought that these are the methods by which the problems within the independent trade union movement can be overcome.

Any such attacks by youth on workers will widen a rift that can still be healed quite easily—and wipe out all the gains in worker-youth co-

operation that have been achieved since 1976.

They would be a gift to the state, which fears a united movement led by the working class more than anything else—and which would actively encourage and take advantage of such clashes.

The experience of the role of Inkatha in Natal, and of vigilantes in many other areas must serve as a serious warning to the movement as to the state's enthusiasm to sow division where it does not exist, and to intensify it where it does.

But the rift has developed—and needs to be healed.

On the one hand there is a sense among many workers that the youth have been insufficiently weighing up all the factors in the situation, and have a readiness to run ahead of the movement—and in these feelings there is a partial truth.

On the other hand the youth blame the organised workers for being too slow and cautious in moving into action, particularly political action—and there is a truth here too.

The feeling of frustration at the

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE



The leaders of Cosatu.

failure to deploy the full potential political power of the organised working class, while strongest amongst the youth, exists also amongst rank and file trade union activists.

This frustration, for example, was strongly expressed by FOSATU members when the FOSATU leadership cancelled the mass education workshop due to be held at the Jabulani Amphitheatre in Soweto on the eve of the state of emergency.

Now the responsibility for mobilising the political potential of the working class organised in the trade unions—and for healing the breach between the trade unions and the youth—is thrust decisively on COSATU.

COSATU

1985 ended with the birth of COSATU, the biggest organisation of black workers in the history of the SA labour movement. This has ushered in a new era.

COSATU would have come into existence eventually—the objective situation was pregnant with it. But its birth had to be induced. That it was born at this particular time is attributable to the risings in the townships. In that sense the youth have acted as the mid-wife of COSATU.

COSATU has been born as the movement is temporarily in ebb. Yet the birth could not have been more

timely. The whole movement has looked to COSATU to throw its weight into consolidating the existing forces of the movement, healing the breach between the organised workers and the youth, and blunting the drive of the ruling class towards reaction.

Despite the ebb, a decisive political initiative by COSATU from the moment of its birth—a well-prepared campaign for an achievable goal—could even have turned the temporarily disadvantageous position of the movement into a disadvantage for the state.

Elijah Barayi's ultimatum to Botha—that if the pass laws were not abolished within six months, the passes would be burnt—provided the basis for just such a campaign.

The ruling class themselves immediately saw the dangers. On 3 December *Business Day* editorialised:

"The threat of a civil disobedience campaign by Cosatu...could be serious. It wasn't too successful in the time of Albert Lutuli, but that is not to say it couldn't be better organised now.

"Quite simply, what does government do if half-a-million black people start burning their passes, especially if they are joined by many non-union members?"—if, in other words, it was not merely half a million, but ten million passes which were burnt!

To carry forward this struggle, thorough preparation and campaigning would have been necessary—and, above all, the COSATU leadership needed to name a date for the burning of the passes.

Unfortunately, from the time of Barayi's speech, there were indications that the conservatives in the trade unions were seeking to block this campaign.

"After a night-long debate on policy" reported the *Cape Times* (3/12/85), "Cosatu's executive appeared to back down on some of the hardline statements made on Sunday by its president, Mr Elijah Barayi.

"Mr Barayi's call for a pass-burning campaign if influx control was not scrapped in six months was clarified as 'merely expressing the feelings and aspirations of our members.'

"Cosatu's assistant secretary, Mr Sydney Mafumadi, said the federation had not decided on a specific deadline on the pass laws."

Shift to left

On the whole, the formation of COSATU has represented an important weakening of the influence of reformism within the trade unions: leadership has shifted to the left.

Yet even the most radical trade union leaders appear to have been cautious about plunging COSATU's resources into a political campaign at this stage.

Cyril Ramaphosa was correct when he pointed out at the launching conference that, while COSATU must strive to make the politics of the working class the politics of the liberation movement, it must not

neglect to strengthen its base in industry.

But, taken forward with thorough preparation from December, a campaign based on the pass law ultimatum would have strengthened COSATU enormously. With the main burden of organisation carried by the energies of the youth, acting with the authority of COSATU, it could have helped to double the membership of the trade union movement in the course of the campaign.

Constructive

At the same time, through this campaign, the energies of the youth, straining at the leash, many tempted to engage in adventures, could have been channeled into constructive political activity which would strengthen their bonds with the workers, and set their sights on a realistically achievable goal.

When comrade Barayi's initiative was not taken forward by the whole COSATU leadership, the ruling class undoubtedly heaved a sigh of relief—and the reaction gained encouragement from what was taken as a sign of weakness.

It was after the trade unions failed to give active leadership to the Eastern Cape general strike last March that striking mineworkers were dismissed en masse at Vaal Reefs. In the same way, the political hesitation of the COSATU leadership coincided with GENCOR's mass dismissals at Impala platinum mine in Bophutatswana.

Without industrial strength, the political potential of the trade unions is weakened. But equally, unless the trade union movement deploys its political muscle, the ruling class grows bolder on the industrial front as well.

Moreover, January saw the biggest death toll since the revolutionary upsurge began—mostly through the reactionary activities of Bantustan thugs and township vigilantes, grown bolder because of the loss of initiative by the movement.

Buthelezi, too, took confidence from the situation to go onto the offensive against COSATU in Natal.

Nevertheless, the regime has not felt confident enough to rest exclusively on repression and reaction. Botha's "Rubicon II" speech at the

end of January, while hopelessly trapped within the framework of maintaining white domination, nevertheless in its tone signalled a renewed search for a "path of reform".

One of its most significant features was the position on the pass laws. In the full-page advertisements which followed it, Botha stated "Well, I can tell you the pass system will be scrapped by July 1 this year."

Undoubtedly, the overwhelming reaction among the masses to this statement is "But with what new scheme for controlling movement and enforcing divisions are you intending to try and replace it?" Influx control has been, for generations, a central mechanism of the capitalist class for enforcing cheap labour—and a document carried by black workers, whatever it is called, is indispensable to enforce influx control. The ruling class will not give up this mechanism lightly.

Nevertheless, can it be denied that it is unprecedented for the regime to define a date so precisely for one of its "reforms", even before carrying through the necessary legislation?

Would Botha have needed to do this, had it not been for the ultimatum issued by Elijah Barayi, and the echo which the regime's intelligence network undoubtedly detected that this ultimatum was gaining among the rank and file of COSATU?

In the weeks before Botha's speech there was growing support among trade union and youth activists in several regions for the naming of a date for pass-burning, as advocated in *Inqaba's* December 2 editorial statement. Unfortunately, the COSATU leadership has not acted swiftly to back up comrade Barayi's ultimatum with a definite challenge to Botha in this way.

Botha has attempted to steal back from the COSATU leadership the initiative for scrapping the 'dompas'.

As if to underline this, the *Financial Mail* (7/2/86) wrote:

"Government has announced that SA's pass laws ... are to be scrapped by July 1.

"Whether President Botha's commitment will pre-empt a Congress of SA Trade Unions threat to launch a mass burning of the dompas in June remains to be seen."

The tone of "Rubicon II", the new discussions regarding the release of Mandela, and this statement on the

pass laws, all reveal that—despite the immense force at the disposal of the state and the temporary ebbing of the movement—there has not been a decisive shift in the underlying balance of forces against the working class. The ruling class feels vulnerable and lacks confidence.

But it is not enough for the leadership of the movement merely to rest on this underlying balance of forces. In contrast to the situation that would have obtained had COSATU from December been engaged in mobilisation on the question of the passes, Botha can even gain some temporary credit among the unorganised mass of workers if he carries out the abolition of the present pass laws and exempts many Africans from any new system of influx control.

Yet what will still be preoccupying the masses is the question "what does the regime intend after July 1 as regards influx control?"

Influx control

Even now, the initiative can be recovered. As General Secretary Naidoo said following the February COSATU CEC, Botha's "announcement of a uniform ID document for all races did not change the fact that black people's movements would still be restricted—influx control had been institutionalised through the homeland system and the system of labour bureaux for recruiting workers. 'Pass laws, influx control and other apartheid laws are interlinked.'" (*City Press*, 16/2/85)

Botha—a statement of the CEC added—"cannot be entrusted with the task of dismantling a system of national oppression and economic exploitation."

Comrade Naidoo went on to promise that "A specific anti-pass law program of action is to be devised by the executive soon".

Botha's July 1 deadline could, for example, be turned against him, if COSATU, together with the UDF, declares that on that date all passes will burn—and, with that, calls a one or two-day national strike to declare that INFLUX CONTROL IS DEAD.

The purpose would be to demonstrate that the oppressed will accept no alternative measures which restrict freedom of movement in the country, including from the

bantustans.

This would require the mobilisation of the youth and workers to begin campaigning as soon as possible, preparing for the event by means of mass explanation and organisation, building the unions and consolidating the community organisations.

However, the longer that there is delay in setting a date and publicising details of the campaign, the more difficult it will be to recover and build the necessary momentum. Every day is precious now if such a campaign is to be a full-blooded success.

Power

Despite the immense power the trade unions can wield in the political struggle, they are not, as **trade unions**, equipped to lead the political struggle as a whole—to prepare the working class and all the oppressed for the conquest of state power.

To wage the political battle against the state, to unite the whole movement around revolutionary policies, the working-class needs to build mass political organisation.

Moreover, it is only through revolutionary workers' political organisation within the trade unions that they can be consistently defended as instruments of the working class against the bosses and the regime—and the conservative influence of reformists among the trade union leaders combatted.

As *Inqaba* has explained in previous material, this political organisation will not come about on the basis of simply declaring a "workers' party."

More than ever before, the experience of the last eighteen months has reaffirmed that, as the masses move into revolutionary struggle, it is towards the ANC that they turn to carry to victory the struggle for democracy and socialism.

Because the black workers and youth are rallying to build the ANC as their own **revolutionary** organisation, the 'liberal' bourgeoisie and its agents have rushed to have consultations with the ANC leadership in exile, hoping to ensnare them into some compromise "resolution" of South Africa's political crisis.

The 'liberal' SA mining bosses are the most calculating section of the ruling class. It was the needs of their industry which laid the basis for apartheid and the cheap labour machinery which the state protects now on behalf of the capitalist class as a whole. Their hands are dripping with the blood not only of the black workers of South Africa, but of the whole of Southern Africa, including Kaunda's Zambia where they held their talks with the ANC.

Less than eighteen months ago, legally striking mineworkers were killed and maimed by police called in to Anglo mines. Just months before the 'talks' Anglo sacked 14 000 mineworkers

To a man, they, and every spokesman of the capitalist class, have declared their implacable opposition to any political "solution" in South Africa based on one-person-one-vote in an undivided country.

The ruling class knows full well that, for the working masses, the struggle for national liberation is a struggle for the power with which to end poverty wages, joblessness, homelessness, and so on—in short, to implement the Freedom Charter as a living reality. This, they will strive to prevent with all the means at their disposal.

Recently, a publication of the so-called "liberal" capitalists—the *Financial Mail* (6/12/85) made their position quite clear on this question. It pointed out that "interventionist military action in a last-ditch attempt to retain the status quo...has not been totally discounted in some quarters."

At the present time, of course, this is not what the decisive sections of the ruling class want. The monopoly bosses, presenting themselves as liberals, seek to distance themselves from the repression of Botha's regime in the hope that through "reforms" that accommodate "moderate" black leaders, they can hold off the revolution.

Nevertheless, the *Financial Mail* concluded, "Just which would be the worst-case scenario—a dictatorship of the Left or one of the Right—is open to conjecture. Few, however, who have any insight into the ideological drift of the African National Congress Freedom Charter and its talk of nationalisation have any serious doubts on that score. **Anything would be preferable to seeing SA's economy decimated by such**

crude attempts at 'wealth redistribution' implicit in the doctrine of the Charter." (Our emphasis—*Editor*)

Faced in the future with an increasingly powerful movement of the working class struggling under the banner of the ANC for the demands of the Freedom Charter, the ruling class have already declared that, rather than give in, they will opt for "a dictatorship of the extreme Right"—by which they mean something far more ferocious and reactionary even than the current regime.

The present state machine is the only and final defence of their wealth, power and ownership of industry, and they depend utterly upon it. They are clear that they will never entrust its government to the African National Congress supported by the full weight of the revolutionary proletarian masses.

It is clear that a "negotiated solution" to the movement's demands for democracy—however much it may be sought after—is ruled out.

If the capitalists don their liberal mombakkies and fly to Lusaka to shake hands with the ANC leaders—it is not in order to discuss how they can make a contribution to the Freedom Charter by handing over their wealth to the people.

On the contrary, it is out of their terror of the hostility to capitalism that exists in the movement—where the slogan that "big business and the state are two sides of the same bloody coin" has become a commonplace—and out of their hopes that the ANC leaders will assuage these fears by entering political compromises on the basis of capitalist interests.

Among activists in the country, the manoeuvres of the bosses are increasingly transparent.

Profits

"Big business", states *SASPU National* (October/November 1985) "is worried that worker, youth and township action may threaten capitalism itself. If there was no resistance...affecting their profits, they would not be clamouring at PW's door for action. Nor would they see much point in meeting the ANC."

Even a priest, Father Smangaliso

Mkhatshwa, a patron of the UDF, is clear on the businessmen's motives: "They want to create a healthy climate for profit-making. They are not really against apartheid. But they realise the township unrest is against their interests." (*Weekly Mail*, 13-19/9/85)

The experience of the last eighteen months has confirmed, in the eyes of wider and wider layers of working people, that the burdens loaded upon them cannot be removed unless the apartheid regime is destroyed root and branch—through a struggle to the end against the capitalist class whose wealth and power that state defends.

Workers' power

The way forward to this is through the mobilisation of the masses led by the organised working class around perspectives, programme, and strategy of uncompromising struggle for **workers' power**—to dismantle the state and replace it by the democratic rule of the working class, and to take the big monopolies out of the hands of the capitalist class and bring them under democratic workers' control and management.

The ANC leadership is called upon to show the way forward in this struggle.

But while on the one hand, throughout 1985, the exiled leadership has been issuing absurd exhortations for the carrying through of an immediate insurrection—on the other hand they have been prepared to talk with the big businessmen, and other spokesmen of the capitalist class.

It has been disturbing to read that the businessmen, while not crowing about the outcome of the talks, certainly did not emerge from them as unhappy men with an ill foreboding about the future of their system.

Tony Bloom, Chairman of Premier group, and a member of the delegation, wrote in the *Financial Mail* (11/10/85): "I was surprised (almost overwhelmed) by the cordiality of the meeting ... I sometimes worry that we got on a little bit too well!...

"Clearly there are fixed positions on either side that are diametrically opposed to each other, but this is the position in many negotiations. I

believe that there could be room for compromise and I would unhesitatingly support any initiative to get the SA government and the ANC into contact with each other."

What do the ANC leadership regard as the justification for these talks? On their own account, they have not been very forthcoming on this question. However a recent article by Howard Barrell in *Work in Progress*, No 39., October 1985) written on the basis of extensive and sympathetic presentation of 'ANC sources', claims that "there are several relatively constant overriding principles guiding the movement's tactics on the question of talks.

Among these, he maintains, are "the need to build maximum unity between all sections and formations of the oppressed, other democrats and progressives"; "to win over to its basic outlook as many potentially amenable whites as possible"; "at least to attempt to neutralise some hitherto reactionary elements, and thereby as much as possible to isolate politically the diehard defenders of what it sees as a racist and exploitative state power"; to "weaken the ranks of the 'generalised enemy'; to "engage in talks which may offer a reasonable prospect of reducing the extent of people's suffering in achieving state power"; to encourage "a new legal climate" which "may enable a number of other progressive and democratic formations ... to hold similar talks."

Maximum unity around the goals of our movement, and the reduction of the suffering of the people, are important tasks. **But they will not be carried forward by these talks.**

In reality, by engaging in these talks, the leadership is creating illusions in the possibility of a negotiated settlement—even in the prospect of a transfer of power to an ANC government on this basis.

Surely the task of the leadership is to use every opportunity to bring it home to the masses that liberation will not be brought to them through negotiations or by any other class except the working class—and that this requires the mobilisation of millions into a conscious revolutionary struggle for power.

The task is to mercilessly expose the fraudulence of the "progressive" and "democratic" claims of big business; to point out that the regime has been shaken but is far from being overthrown, and to put forward

a programme of action with uncompromising democratic and socialist aims as the basis for mobilising the millions of black workers and preparing for the armed seizure of power by the organised working class.

Only the organisation of such a struggle—**by confronting all supporters of the state power with an implacably determined and organised alternative power**—can "weaken the ranks of the generalised enemy", "isolate politically the diehard defenders of the regime", win over "as many potentially amenable whites as possible", "build maximum unity between all sections and formations of the oppressed", and "offer a reasonable prospect of reducing the extent of people's suffering."

To defeat and dismantle the apartheid state of the bosses it will be necessary not only for the oppressed to become mobilised, organised, and armed under the leadership of the working class, but for this movement to **remove from the ruling class the support that they enjoy among the working-class and lower middle class whites who provide the regime with its social base and who, as the active arm of the state machine, are the source of its continued strength.**

An attitude of vacillation, temporising, or compromise with the capitalist class not only serves to disarm the movement of the black majority—but will have a profoundly negative effect on the consciousness of the white workers.

White workers

The effects of capitalist crisis, and the challenge of the black working class to white domination, are awakening the white workers and lower middle class out of the long slumber they have enjoyed in their privilege. Most, blaming the government for 'betraying them to the liberal capitalists', will initially move further to the right, as is plainly already taking place. They will try to find a way out by going **further** down the blind alley of racist frenzy.

Yet, no more than the present regime or the "progressive" businessmen, can Treurnicht or Marais or Terreblanche or even a military dictatorship, restore the liv-

ing standards of the whites, or guarantee their political privileges.

With the advance of the revolution, with degeneration of the SA situation into chaos and horror seemingly without end, the whites will look more and more desperately for some solution—for some real alternative. If they do not find it in the forces of the revolution, they will cling more and more desperately to reaction.

The least appealing alternative for the whites is the prospect of a toenadering between the big capitalists and leaders of the black masses; of being "sold out" by secret deals. The ranks of the whites will not be persuaded to believe that out of such negotiations, any agreement can be arrived at which offers them a future.

Rather than undermining the support amongst the white workers for the extreme right, such negotiations will increase it.

If the white workers and middle class are left in the clutches of the ultra-right reaction, it is the prospect of a bloody racial civil war which would be increased.

The task is to convert a struggle which will inevitably all along have elements of a racial civil war into a **class war led by the working class against the capitalist class and all its supporters**. A key to this will be the firm pursuit of non-racial class policies by the powerful movement of the black working-class majority towards their lost white working-class brothers and sisters.

This is the best, and in the end the only guarantee, for weakening and isolating the enemy and thus reducing the peoples' suffering.

Armed struggle

Never before has the demand of the youth and workers for arms been so urgent as in the insurrectionary struggles of 1984-5.

In Tembisa, at the beginning of the year, youth were chanting "Mkhonto We Sizwe! Mkhonto We Sizwe! We are waiting for you! We are unarmed!" In Queenstown, at the end of the year, Congress youth donned military style uniforms, and marched in formation carrying AK47's carved out of wood and plastic!

The need for 'armed struggle' has been proclaimed by the ANC leadership for the past twenty-five years: MK was formed in 1961. Yet, at the same time as calling for an immediate insurrection in 1985, ANC broadcasts on Radio Freedom made it plain that the movement could not look to the organisation for the necessary arms. Clearly no serious preparations for arming an insurrection had been made.

In reality as we have discussed previously, calls for immediate all-out insurrection to overthrow the state were ridiculously premature and adventurist.

But what has been necessary at this stage is to **organise and develop the capacity of the youth and workers, fighting on the township streets, to defend themselves more effectively against troops and police and deliver, from a defensive position, punishing armed blows against their attackers.**

Once again, however, as in 1976, when the need for armed self-defence arose against the murderous forces of the state, neither the arms nor the practical policies for doing this have been forthcoming from the underground leadership. This is despite a debate within the ranks of the ANC in exile—reflected in articles in *Sechaba* and the *African Communist*—on the question of arming the masses.

At root, the paralysis of the leadership stems from uncertainty over a fundamental political question: whether 'armed struggle' is to be seen as a means of 'pressurising' the ruling class towards a 'negotiated settlement' (a utopian conception which leads, in practice, to holding back the arming of the revolutionary mass movement); or whether the course should be set firmly towards organising and preparing the forces, consciousness and material means necessary for an armed conquest of power by the black working people in future.

On the question of armed struggle, as on every other question, our movement needs to take as its guideline the principle: **what develops the self-confidence and consciousness of the working class in its own power to confront and defeat the vicious apartheid regime and the bosses through an eventual mass armed insurrection.** For only by these means can national liberation and democracy be secured, and the road opened to the socialist transformation of society.

As *Inqaba* has consistently explained, the ANC leadership has failed to adopt a **working-class** approach to the question of armed struggle.

Despite the talk of "Iran-style insurrection" and "people's war", the leadership have, over 25 years, based their conception of 'armed struggle' on the methods of guerillaism: the activities of small armed groups, detached from the mass organisations, and operating independently of the rhythm of the movement.

In the armed confrontations which have taken place in the townships in 1984-5, guerilla tactics by youth and workers have had an essential role to play. Small groups in particular areas, organising to engage in hit-and-run battles with the police and troops, are necessary particularly at the early stages of any mass insurrectionary movement.

In contrast, a guerilla strategy is based on the wrong idea that, when it comes to challenging the power of the state, a guerilla 'army'—such as MK—can **substitute itself for the power (eventually, the fully armed power) of the mass movement of the working class.**

Industrialisation

In South African conditions—with a high level of industrialisation, and a peasantry virtually eliminated—a **guerilla war** has no prospect of winning state power. To the extent that illusions have been created in the ability of guerilla forces to substitute themselves for the power of the working class in confronting the state, they stand in the way of the working class identifying and preparing to take on the tasks which it alone can carry to victory.

In periods of forward movement, such as the revolutionary upsurge of 1984-5—and, indeed, the whole period since about 1980—this is not so apparent. In fact, during 1984-5 actions by MK have been dwarfed by the spontaneous battles conducted by the masses themselves, and in particular the youth.

But in phases of relative ebb, such as we have now entered, it is the danger of fostering illusions—and further dangers too—which are opened up by the pursuit of a guerilla strategy.

In such conditions, sabotage, bombings, etc have a heightened, and sometimes even a briefly spectacular, visibility. Because the masses no longer have the same sense of power as in the period of advance, such actions can win applause as "at least a blow against the state."

Pretext

However, the state uses the occurrence of these actions as a pretext for stepping up repression, not merely against "terrorists", but against all the organs of the mass movement—and as propaganda for hardening the support of whites for the regime.

It is essential to see that armed struggle conducted by formations of **the mass movement**—including guerilla tactics by groups of youth and workers on a wide scale during a phase of general advance—has an entirely different effect **politically** than military actions conducted by a few guerilla detachments operating independently of the mass movement, especially in a phase of ebb.

Unfortunately, such debate on the strategy of armed struggle as has taken place among the ANC leadership in exile in the course of 1985 has not involved any fundamental reappraisal of approach, but merely on how far the range of guerilla targets should be extended to so-called "soft targets", including white civilians.

This has coincided with the bombings in Natal, and landmine explosions on the borders, in which even small children of whites have been killed. To say that many black children have died, and that whites should also be made to suffer for apartheid, is to miss the essential political point as far as revolution is concerned.

White armed power is the basis of the SA state. To defeat the state, that white armed power will need to be defeated. There is no other road to that except by raising the movement of the black working class, and all the oppressed, to its full revolutionary strength and consciousness.

In the coming waves of revolutionary upsurge support for the ruling class can be stripped away only through a combination of clear working-class policies for democracy and socialism—and the emergence of

an unconquerable revolutionary force capable of defending itself with arms against the state and white reaction and moving from there towards the conquest of power.

The lessons of how to engage in armed struggle against the state have had to be learned virtually from scratch by the youth—with enormous ingenuity and resourcefulness—first in 1976, but above all in the uprisings of the last eighteen months.

This experience is a precious resource for the future—and will need to be developed in a scientific way through assimilating the history of insurrectionary experience of the whole international working-class movement.

With these lessons properly digested and applied, the movement can be better equipped even in the next insurrectionary wave for armed defence against the death-squads, the police and the army.

This, in turn, will steel and prepare ever wider layers for conducting the future mass armed insurrection to

overthrow the state.

Armed struggle, however, is only the continuation of the political struggle by other means.

Nine tenths of the necessary preparation for the armed defence of the movement, and for the insurrection, consists in building the mass movement under the leadership of the working class around scientific perspectives and clear political policies for democracy and socialism.

The South African revolution will be protracted, bitter, and bloody. But, after the struggles of 1984-5, who can doubt that the revolution has begun?

It will be carried to victory by the heroism of the youth and the uncompromising determination of the whole black working class, building mass trade unions and a mass ANC on a socialist programme, through absorbing and developing the time-tested revolutionary methods of Marxism, the international inheritance of the working class.

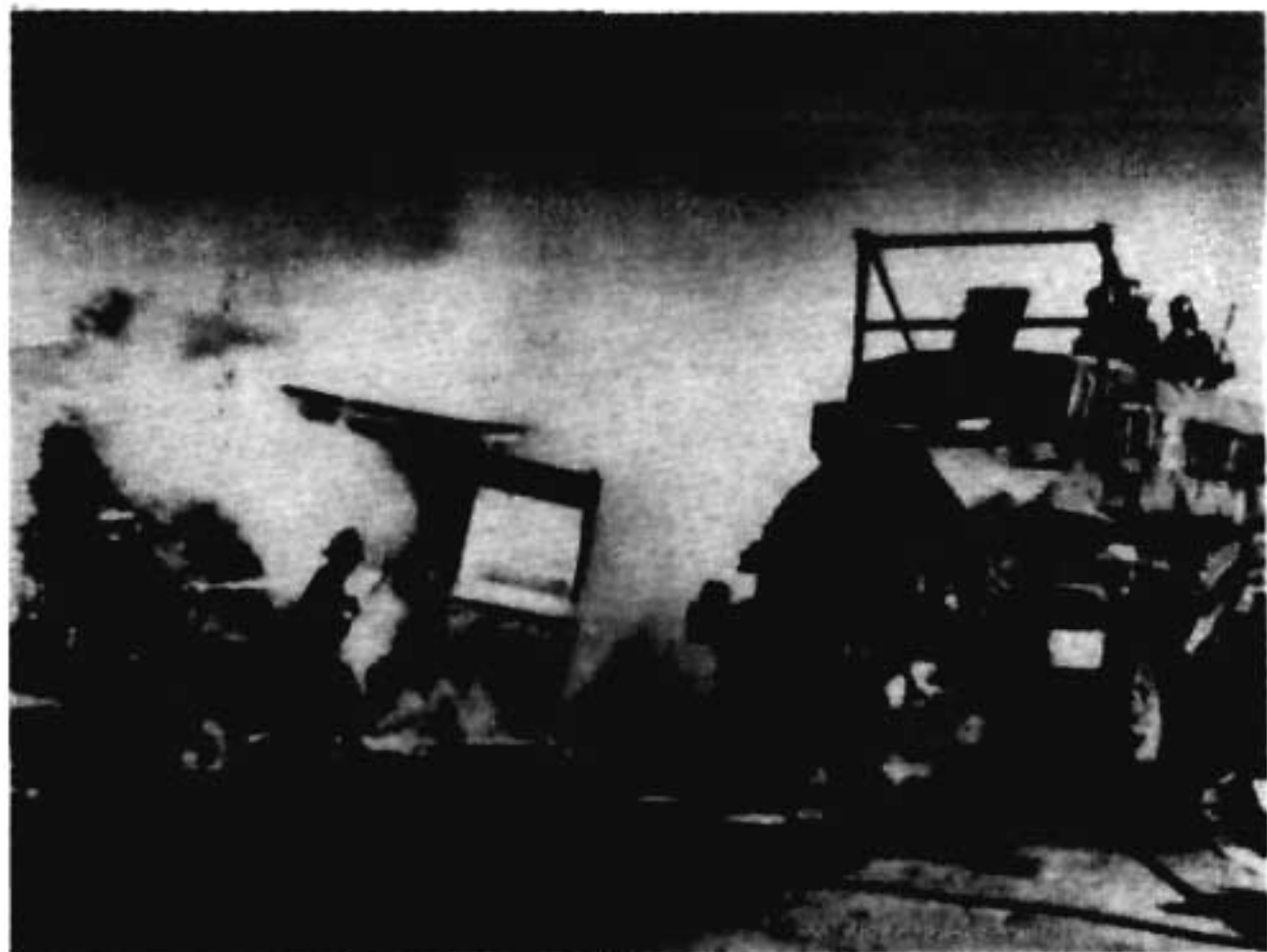


How I got involved in fighting the police

by Martin Davids
a transport worker from Athlone



Policeman attacking a youth in the course of the uprising in the Western Cape, September 1985.



State forces attempt to dismantle a barricade in a Western Cape township, October 1985.

My work takes me away from the Cape a lot. The first day of my return I was confronted by violence in numerous areas around Cape Town. Youths refused to attend classes although they went to school. Police and the riot squads came on the school grounds and started to shoot teargas among them.

That is how the violence started. That is why the students were stoning government property like police stations, post offices and civil servants' homes.

I'll make another example. I was standing in front of our house when these Casspirs patrolled down the streets. People came out of their houses to see what was going on. Numbers of people came to see, even the little children. Suddenly they fired teargas canisters amongst them, which was definitely a shock to all because no-one expected that. Mothers and fathers ran around to try and get their children indoors.

That's when anger built up in me because that was really unnecessary. My brother, a couple of school students and myself started stoning them and shooting them with catapults which did not help much. They started firing at us, but we quickly made ourselves missing.

During the evening we informed many mothers and fathers to lock all their doors and keep their children indoors because we weren't finished with the bastards.

We blocked numerous roads in the area to attract the Casspirs. People who travelled in the buses were told to get out and buses were set alight because the government had a certain share in Tramways. There was a certain shop, I would not like to give the name, which gave us petrol for petrol bombs.

There was a time when I attended a funeral service at the mosque. There were thousands and thousands of mourners and the majority was Moslems because several had been killed. When the sermon was over the Casspirs arrived and started dispersing the crowd with teargas. One Moslem died in front of the mosque that day and several were injured.

I just hope that someday there will be a definite solution to the unrest and violence in this country, and let each and everyone prosper of the fruits. We need to bring in a system in South Africa for each and everyone and try and make it a peaceful South Africa. ■

Indiscriminate attack on whites is not the way forward

**inqaba
YA BASEBENZI**

EDITORIAL STATEMENT — 6 September 1985

In a broadcast from Addis Ababa on 2 September, the ANC's Radio Freedom called on its forces in South Africa to shatter the complacency of the whites and let them feel the "flames of revolution" by taking the battle "right into their homes, into their kitchens and bedrooms."

The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC regrets and deplores this mad call for indiscriminate killing of whites and appeals to the ANC leadership to repudiate the broadcast immediately.

Murderous atrocities of the apartheid regime

The murderous atrocities of the apartheid regime, the intolerable suffering inflicted on black people, the cruelty and arrogance of the oppressors—all necessitate a firm revolutionary response. The peaceful elimination of the apartheid system by a process of 'reform' is impossible: it has to be forcibly overthrown. The preparation and use of arms in the struggle in South Africa is necessary and inevitable.

But the strategy and tactics of the movement must be clear-headed.

Especially now when the state is trying savagely to crush and demoralise the black youth and workers and regain a grip on events, blind acts of frustration and despair can only weaken the movement and strengthen the white reaction.

The recent attack on white motorists near Duncan Village and the attack on the suburb of Amalinda (in the name of "taking the struggle to the Boers"); the clash between black youth and armed white residents in the working-class and lower-middle-class Cape Town suburb of Kraaifontein—these are clear examples of counter-productive actions playing directly into the hands of the regime.

We must in no way repeat the disastrous methods of Poqo in the early 1960s, whose desperate and futile acts of violence against ordinary white people contributed to the crushing of the movement by reaction at that time.

The heroism and readiness for self-sacrifice on the part of the strugglers, especially the youth, in South Africa provides an immense reservoir of strength for the revolution. But the responsibility of the ANC is to weld together on that basis a self-disciplined mass movement, guided by a clear perspective and understanding of its tasks. This is far more difficult and demanding for a leadership than to broadcast calls for bloodshed in frenzied tones.

There is no short cut possible in South Africa. Power cannot be 'seized' immediately or in the short term. The relationship of forces is still heavily weighted in favour of the ruling class and the state. That cannot be over-

come by sheer mass heroism or all-out blind attack.

The formidable task facing our movement in South Africa is to unite all the struggles of the black people into an ever more powerful mass movement, skilfully divide the whites, split the forces of the state, cripple the ruling class, and so prepare the overthrow of the system. **The tactics advocated in the ANC broadcast will have exactly the opposite effect.**

They will divide and demoralise the oppressed people, unite whites into a ferocious bloc of racist reaction the like of which has not been seen, strengthen the state forces, and bring down ever more savage attacks on the black communities, youth organisations and trade unions.

The way forward for the struggle is to systematically build the strength of the mass movement round the growing power of the organised black working class, uniting the militant youth and workers in well-planned nationwide action campaigns against apartheid and capitalism.

There is no other way at this stage to effectively take the struggle beyond the flaming township streets and into the camp of the oppressors.

A clear class appeal to white workers and middle-class people, themselves in various ways exploited and used by the system, must be patiently maintained at all times. Only by this route, long and hard as it is, will the basis of the regime be weakened to the point where it can be overthrown by an armed insurrection of the black working people.

A clear sense of direction from the leadership

What the mass movement needs above all at this moment is a clear sense of direction from its leadership. Incredibly, however, the ANC is presently combining calls for bloody attacks against ordinary white people with reported preparations to receive a delegation of South Africa's white monopoly capitalists anxious to find a basis of stability for their continued rule.

It is time for the ANC leadership to rethink fundamentally its policy, strategy and tactics for the liberation struggle in South Africa. There is not a moment to lose.

**Editorial Board of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*
(journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency
of the African National Congress)**

Footnote: INQABA supporters with experience of township battles against the police and army in the recent period, are working with the editors to analyse, from the Marxist standpoint, the political, strategic and tactical issues involved in carrying forward armed resistance by the mass movement in South African conditions. We aim to publish a detailed document on armed struggle in the South African revolution as soon as possible.

INKATHA— this spear of counter-revolution must be broken.



Members of an Inkatha impi

“Like never before, Inkatha has shown its true colours. They are not green, yellow and black. They are blood red.”
(*State of the Nation*, Oct/Nov 1985)

The flag of Inkatha is smeared with the blood of trade unionists, students and political activists who have challenged its reactionary role. It is red with the blood of hundreds of people savagely beaten and stabbed by Buthelezi's 'impis' seeking out and terrorising opponents of the KwaZulu dictator.

The middle-class mafia which leads Inkatha, propped up by big business and the Pretoria regime, co-operates with Botha's efforts to repress our movement by disrupting school

boycotts and strikes and attacking the UDF with armed thugs. At the same time Buthelezi is greeted warmly by Reagan and Thatcher, who are the enemies of workers throughout the world.

The lying bosses' media at home and overseas have portrayed Buthelezi as a man of non-violence, and Inkatha as a force of 'opposition' to the SA regime. In fact it is an instrument of **violent counter-revolution**. It is used by the bosses and the government to sow divisions



Gatsha Buthelezi, organiser of bloody counter-revolution.

among black working people and to attack workers and youth.

Inkatha and the police now collaborate openly. In 1976 they were ashamed to admit that Inkatha helped the police to incite Zulu hostel-dwellers in Soweto to go on a bloody rampage in an attempt to break a stay-at-home called by the youth. Today the police shamelessly stand by while Gatsha's impis and hired killers viciously dispose of opponents of Inkatha in KwaZulu and townships in Natal.

The state is actively organising, inciting and using vigilante killers and Inkatha gangs to terrorise the townships, drive out UDF supporters, and provoke racial and tribal animosities to cut across the revolutionary movement.

The counter-revolutionary role of Buthelezi and Inkatha is not a new development. It flows inevitably from the collaboration of these petty-bourgeois political 'leaders' with the bantustan system of the state, and from their support of capitalism against the democratic and socialist aspirations of the working class.

The Institute for Black Research, in its pamphlet *Unrest in Natal*, August 1985, summarises Inkatha's record:

“This autocratic trend was apparent at the outset for one of the first requests KwaZulu made to Pretoria, on assuming the status of a self-governing territory in 1977, was to extend the state of emergency, with its provision for detention without trial for 90 days, then restricted to Msinga, to the whole of KwaZulu.

“In 1975 the Umlazi Residents' Association became disaffected when

KwaZulu became actively involved in the removals of shack dwellers in the Malukazi area. In 1979 the residents of Makuta returned four non-Inkatha councillors out of a total of six, despite allegations that Inkatha officials had threatened to evict residents from their houses if they did not support party candidates. In 1980 Inkatha was accused of acting with the police in teargassing students in a bid to break a schools-boycott; in 1983 students at the University of Zululand were attacked by Inkatha, resulting in 5 deaths and many injuries. In 1984 over a hundred residents of Hambanati were forced to flee for refuge to the Gandhi settlement following an Inkatha attack on their homes." (p.4)

In April 1983 Msizi Harrison Dube, Lamontville community leader and former Robben Island prisoner, was assassinated after coming into conflict with Inkatha councillors who supported the Port Natal Administration Board.

When 12 000 people gathered to unveil a tombstone for him in July 1984, over 100 Inkatha supporters turned up outside the cemetery, many of them armed with spears and knobkerries and some apparently with guns. Some of them told reporters they had been sent to Lamontville to "eradicate elements opposed to Inkatha". (*Sowetan*, 24/7/84)

This was at the time of a struggle by the people of Lamontville and Chesterville to prevent their forcible incorporation into KwaZulu. Over 80% of residents were opposed to coming under the rule of Buthelezi.

In this clash at the Msizi Dube memorial, the Inkatha thugs were heavily outnumbered, and the pro-UDF youth successfully fought back. Since then they have had to defend the township on many occasions against night attacks by impis. Buthelezi became increasingly incensed that Lamontville had become a solid UDF area and a 'no-go' area for his thugs.

Fighting

In September 1985, during a violently anti-ANC and anti-UDF speech by Buthelezi in Umlazi, busloads of armed Inkatha supporters, led by a top official, crossed into Lamontville to attack the residents. Again fighting flared when

these 'warriors' were confronted by UDF youth. Several people were killed. "Hippos and police vans passed groups of impis and they repeatedly greeted each other," reports *SASPU National* (Oct/Nov 1985).

This attack came against a background of horrific violence between Africans, and between Africans and Indians, in the townships of KwaZulu and Natal. It began with the assassination of Victoria Mxenge on 1 August and culminated in massacres by the police and a sustained reign of terror by Inkatha. Some 70 people were killed, and well over 1 000 reported injured.

Shooting

The shooting of Victoria by agents of the regime was a signal to Inkatha impis to try to wipe out the UDF in the area. Natal and KwaZulu was being drawn into the tidal movement of revolutionary struggle in cities and small towns countrywide. Buthelezi and his paymasters were clearly determined to use Inkatha to cut across this movement, and divert it into violent clashes between blacks.

Inkatha's attack on 5 000 unarmed UDF supporters attending a memorial for Victoria Mxenge in Umlazi cinema left about 20 people dead. Police, who were in massed formation there, denied all knowledge of the incident.

In Inanda, although Inkatha denied responsibility, men shouting "Usuthu!" (Inkatha's war-cry) burned and looted the homes and shacks of Indian residents. Indian workers have lived side-by-side with Africans in Inanda since 1860. But Buthelezi wants them out as they are an obstacle to the incorporation of the whole of Inanda into KwaZulu.

Organised attacks on Indians, coupled with deliberate spreading of rumours that this had been the work of 'Congress', produced a chaotic situation of fighting, looting and burning involving rival crowds of African and Indian youth and workers.

This was felt as a serious setback for the entire movement nationwide. Nevertheless, a survey by the Institute for Black Research, conducted in August, showed that among Africans in KwaMashu, Umlazi, Inanda and Clermont, support for the UDF had

doubled to 50% while support for Inkatha had fallen from 20% to 5%, as a result of the experience of the 'unrest.' People knew where responsibility for the violence lay.

Support for the UDF among coloured and Indian people in the Durban area had also increased—although only marginally. (The vast majority of these people claimed to support **no organisation**.)

The leaders of the independent non-racial unions took a bold and correct step, when, at the end of November, the founding conference and rally of COSATU was held in Natal. This was to demonstrate the power of workers' unity to overcome racial division and stand up to Buthelezi and Inkatha on his own ground.

As a result, Buthelezi has declared civil war also against COSATU and its unions, declaring the federation to be a 'front' for the ANC. He is now attempting to set up rival 'unions' under Inkatha in an effort to split the working class in Natal/KwaZulu.

The task of taking on and defeating Buthelezi and Inkatha—the task of destroying this spear of counter-revolution thrust into the side of our movement—has now become central. It cannot be postponed.

Strategy

A strategy to defeat Inkatha has to be based firmly on two facts.

Firstly that Inkatha is, in its inherent nature, a counter-revolutionary organisation directed against the struggle of the black working people to overthrow the state, and that its weapons against our revolution are inevitably the weapons of violence, murder and terror. **From this flows the need for a policy of organised and armed self-defence by the trade unions and the UDF against Inkatha.**

Secondly, our strategy must take account of the fact that Inkatha has built up a basis of mass membership which, even while its support dwindles in the townships, continues to exercise a political hold over many old people, women, and workers, especially from the impoverished rural areas of KwaZulu. **From this flows the need for a bold political**

challenge by COSATU and the UDF, aimed to liberate the mass of Inkatha members from its reactionary grip and to provide a bridge to the revolutionary movement.

Factors

Why was Inkatha able to develop as a mass organisation in KwaZulu/Natal, with its leadership claiming up to a million members? There are a number of factors in this, bound together.

The Zulu-speaking people of KwaZulu/Natal have a warrior tradition of resistance to colonial conquest that is renowned around the world. The Zulu kingdom also resisted the incorporation of its adherents into the wage-labour system.

Buthelezi's *Inkatha ye Nkululeko ye Sizwe* had a forerunner in *Inkatha ya ka Zulu*, founded by king Solomon Ka Dinizulu in 1922. It was formed for two reasons: firstly, in an attempt to stop the disintegration of the tribal kingdom under the pressures of capitalist expansion; secondly, to combat the rising influence of the ICU among the rural labourers and small farmers.

Historically, therefore, Inkatha has combined an element of resistance against conquest, white domination and the pressures of capitalism, with hostility to independent worker organisation.

Gatsha Buthelezi, after assuming his chieftainship in 1953, built on the tradition of resistance by successfully opposing Pretoria's imposition of the Bantu authorities system in Natal. He joined the ANC in the 1950s.

Of royal descent, Buthelezi represented—and represents—those sections of the KwaZulu petty bourgeois who hope to use their limited local privileges, traditional chiefly institutions, and now their 'power base' in the bantustan apparatus, as a springboard for their own eventual incorporation into the central establishment of capitalist wealth and power.

These petty oppressors and exploiters, with interests and aims fundamentally at odds with those of the dispossessed and working-class mass of the people in KwaZulu/Natal, have contrived to blend together their



An Indian-owned shopping centre destroyed by the August violence

own limited resistance to the impositions and restrictions laid down by Pretoria with the masses' still semi-conscious striving to be free of all the oppression and exploitation of the racist and capitalist system.

Hence both the initial success of Buthelezi in building a mass Inkatha—and the contradictions in which Inkatha is now increasingly caught up in trying to prevent the erosion of its former mass base.

On the one hand, the essentially collaborative nature of Buthelezi and the aspiring petty-bourgeois elite he represents (collaborative, even while in 'conflict' with their Pretoria masters); on the other hand the essentially revolutionary striving of the Zulu-speaking masses (revolutionary even when overlaid with tribalism and conservative illusions)—these two contradictory class natures could never rest easily together in one organisation.

Sensing the volcanic movement that can so easily engulf their mass base and tear it from them, Buthelezi and the Inkatha mafia have always reacted to political opposition with ferocity born of fear.

The first challenge was from the youth in the early to mid-1970s, under the banner of Black Consciousness, with its forceful repudiation of all collaboration with the bantustan system. Buthelezi's apoplectic

hatred of Black Consciousness has only been exceeded by his new-found hatred of the ANC.

This change has taken place precisely as the Congress movement has risen as a mass challenge to the state, the bosses and all their agents—as the working class under the banner of the ANC and UDF has begun to move into active revolutionary opposition to the regime and its collaborators.

From the outset, in fact, Buthelezi used Inkatha to try to prevent the emergence of independent democratic organisations of the working class.

Durban strikes

It is not a coincidence that Inkatha was formed in 1975, in the aftermath of the Durban strikes of 1973 and the widespread industrial struggles that followed. The dangers of a united workers' movement loomed large before the capitalists and their petty-bourgeois agents.

While Gatsha did not support the strikes, Inkatha stepped into a political vacuum, providing initially an outlet for political aspirations of Zulu workers, youth and rural poor. This political vacuum existed because

the ANC, after its banning and disastrous turn to a guerilla strategy in the early 1960s, had withdrawn most of its surviving working-class cadres from the country and had not built systematic political organisation on an underground basis.

More than this, however, the success of Inkatha in filling the 'vacuum' resulted in large measure from the support given to it by the ANC leadership in exile.

Admission

In a remarkable admission to the 1985 Consultative Conference of the ANC in Zambia, comrade Oliver Tambo recounted what happened:

"To return to the internal, we must also report that 'throughout the period after the Morogoro Conference (1969), we had been concerned about the organisation and activation of the masses of our people in the bantustans against the apartheid system as a whole, including its bantustan creations. Consequently we were of the view that, among other things, it was of vital importance that we should encourage the formation in the bantustans of mass democratic organisations where none existed, and urge that those which existed should be strengthened and activated..."

"It was also in this context that we maintained regular contact with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of the KwaZulu bantustan. We sought that this former member of the ANC Youth League who had taken up his position in the KwaZulu

bantustan after consultations with our leadership, should use the legal opportunities provided by the bantustan programme to participate in the mass mobilisation of our people on the correct basis of the orientation of the masses to focus on the struggle for a united and non-racial South Africa. In the course of our discussions with him, we agreed that this would also necessitate the formation of a mass democratic organisation in the bantustan that he headed. Inkatha originated from this agreement.

"Unfortunately, we failed to mobilise our own people to take on the task of resurrecting Inkatha as the kind of organisation we wanted owing to the understandable antipathy of many of our comrades towards what they considered as working within the bantustan system. The task of reconstituting Inkatha therefore fell on Gatsha Buthelezi himself who then built Inkatha as a personal power base far removed from the kind of organisation we had visualised." (*Conference Documents*, pages 20-21. Our emphasis.)

Where lies the source of this appalling blunder, which has cost, and will yet cost, so much in lives and suffering? It lies in the failure of the ANC leadership to approach political questions from a working-class standpoint, with a class analysis of people, organisations and perspectives.

Squeezed between the contending forces of the capitalist class and the working class, oppressed by big capital and the state yet fearful of losing its petty privileges in a workers' revolution, the middle class is inherently disposed to opportunist vacillation and therefore treachery

towards the masses.

The diverse elements of the middle class, lacking cohesion and possessing no independent political standpoint of their own, are pulled hither and thither by the pressures of capital, the capitalist state, and the working class. When the mass working-class organisations are showing a clear and firm revolutionary lead in action, the bulk of the oppressed middle class can be drawn magnetically behind them.

When the alternative to that is practically closed off by the strength and determination of the working class, when the workers are able to mount a challenge for state power itself, then the bulk of the middle class can adjust themselves as easily to the idea of living under democratic workers' rule as they accommodate themselves to the dictatorship of the monopolies under capitalism.

Danger

The danger arises when, instead of the necessary attitude of vigilance and deep political distrust towards the politicians of the middle class, the working class is encouraged to have faith in their 'democratic' good intentions.

The whole essence of the game as far as petty-bourgeois politicians are concerned is to deceive the people by cultivating the illusion that the unbridgeable class gulf between workers



An Inkatha roadblock on the outskirts of Mpumalanga township, August 1985.

and bosses, between the working-class movement and the bosses' state, can be bridged by them through artful compromises, through the suppression of the workers' socialist aims, through this or that concession in the sphere of democracy.

Of course individuals from middle-class or even bourgeois backgrounds can break with their class and go over whole-heartedly to the revolutionary movement of the working class. History has many examples of outstanding revolutionary leaders who have taken this route.

But that possible evolution of individuals does not alter the fact that the working class can have confidence only in its own power as a class, must subject its leadership constantly to democratic working-class control, and requires a clear working-class revolutionary program as much for the victory of national liberation and democracy as in the struggle for socialism.

Petty-bourgeois politicians who fail to break with their class, who oppose the fight for workers' power and socialism, and who are not under working-class control—however much they may wrap themselves for convenience in the colours of our movement—at some point inevitably must enter into conflict with and must betray the working people's cause.

Encouraged

To have encouraged Gatsha—always an avowed pro-capitalist and opportunist—to enter and use as his base the bantustan apparatus created and funded by the state; to have given ANC blessing to his creation of a mass political organisation on tribal lines and linked to this bantustan apparatus; to have disregarded completely the fact that independent working-class organisation is the only reliable basis for genuine “mass democratic organisation”—all this would have been bad enough.

Yet, perhaps the victims of Inkatha would not have died in vain if, from the debacle of this policy, the ANC leadership drew fundamental conclusions which would ensure no other mistake of like character could ever be made again. But the report by comrade Oliver Tambo to the ANC

Buthelezi with his 'master'—former Anglo American Corporation chairman Harry Oppenheimer.



Consultative Conference draws no such conclusions.

Instead, by clear implication, it puts the blame on the “many of our comrades” whose “understandable antipathy” towards working within the bantustan system meant they failed to build Inkatha themselves, and so left “the task” to Gatsha!

We should salute those ANC comrades who always resisted the leadership's policy of fraternisation with and support for Buthelezi and Inkatha. The movement has them to thank that an even worse setback for the ANC and the struggle as a whole has not been suffered.

Inkatha, let us remember, was always, in conception, in constitution, in purpose, a tribalist organisation linked to the state. Its leadership is constitutionally reserved exclusively for Zulus. Its ruling National Council is designated “the supreme body of the Zulu nation”, and includes the entire membership of the KwaZulu ‘Legislative Assembly’. The constitution decrees that the President of Inkatha must be the Chief Minister of KwaZulu—an office restricted to hereditary Zulu chiefs.

How could this ever have been conceived of by the ANC leadership as a vehicle for “mass democratic organisation” of working people for revolutionary purposes of national liberation? How could there be any surprise that it has turned out to be a vehicle for counter-revolutionary violence by the state and its petty-bourgeois collaborators? Even a grain of Marxist understanding could have prevented such a disastrous mistake.

Yet, throughout, the policy of the ANC leadership towards Buthelezi and Inkatha has received the silent

endorsement of the SA ‘Communist’ Party—a body wrongly assumed by many to be defending working-class interests and upholding Marxist ideas within the ANC.

In fact the SACP leaders organised, in 1979, the suspension (and later expulsion) from the ANC of Marxists who, alone at that time, were prepared to voice open opposition to the secret meeting of the ANC leadership with Buthelezi in London. At the time, the leadership denied the meeting had taken place—but in 1985 it was reported to the Consultative Conference as an attempt to “ensure unity of approach (with Buthelezi) to the main strategic requirements of the struggle”!

Against this whole background it becomes easier to see why, in 1975, the fledgling independent unions in Natal (later to form part of FOSATU) came perilously close to being drawn into the clutches of Inkatha—a course that was being seriously discussed at that time. This danger was averted, however, largely owing to the instinctive class sense of the worker militants in the unions who were determined that the workers' organisations should not come under petty-bourgeois and semi-state control.

Approval

Buthelezi, of course, has never been naive enough to depend solely on ANC approval to build a mass membership of Inkatha. He could foresee eventual rivalry and conflict with the ANC, whose trust he was temporarily eager to exploit.

Therefore, from the outset, measures of force, blackmail and intimidation were used to impose membership of Inkatha on Zulu-speaking people in KwaZulu.

Coercion has increased as the trade union movement, political, community and youth organisations, genuinely fighting for the needs of black working people, have risen to overshadow and oppose Inkatha.

As a UDF supporter in Umlazi told *SASPU National*: "...most UDF members (here) carry an Inkatha membership card. It's like a KwaZulu dompas. You can't get a house, or a job, or a pass without one." Those who do not have an Inkatha card are assumed to be UDF sympathisers, deserving to be beaten, killed and have their homes burnt.

Weakness

However, far from this indicating the strength of Inkatha, it is a symptom of its inherent weakness politically that such methods have to be used to prevent the evaporation of its membership. This weakness is shown, too, in the constant rhetorical references Buthelezi is obliged to make, at rallies and in the press, to the militant tradition of the Zulus' resistance to conquest, and the projection of Inkatha as a "liberation

movement".

Marx wrote:

"The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes...." (from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*)

When Zulu workers, youth and rural poor, trapped in a political vacuum, suffering poverty, national oppression and all other manifestations of capitalist exploitation, have conjured up the tribal spirits and symbols of the past, this has been in the course of their awakening to a new epoch of revolutionary liberation struggle. For them "the tradition of all the dead generations" is precisely a spirit of militant resistance to the oppressor.

Buthelezi and the Inkatha mafia exploit these "names, battle cries and costumes" in an effort to turn back into the past a social movement that, in its actual inner force, has been groping towards a democratic and socialist future in common with the black working class throughout South Africa.

To succeed in his purpose even temporarily, Buthelezi is compelled to speak in tones radically in contrast with his reactionary deeds.

"Warrior blood flows in my veins," he told the *London Daily Express* (26/10/85), echoing his usual stadium demagoguery. "There are no more militant people than the Zulus—we have shaken all southern Africa before.

"But my people do not want war now. We do not think it is the time. It is no use attacking someone if you have no chance of defeating him.

"At the moment my people are unarmed, but from what is happening you will see that their fingers are itching. Yet I have no right whatsoever to sacrifice young lives needlessly.

"It could change. I have never ruled out in the life of nations that there can come a time when there is a just war—I have never ruled out that this is an option we may face one day."

To sustain his position, Buthelezi must demonstrate that the oppressor cannot be defeated. Therefore he must attack those forces which are beginning to shake the oppressor in battle, which are beginning to raise within the mass of the working class countrywide the confidence that, given time, with organisation, with unity, with the necessary program and fighting leadership, and with arms, the liberation struggle can be victorious.

Maintaining that the regime of white domination is invincible, Buthelezi summons up the old, moderate, 'petitioning' tradition of the ANC and uses ANC colours to try to contain the anger of his members against poverty, oppression and degradation. He contrasts this ANC with the ANC which working-class people throughout South Africa are striving to build as an instrument for revolution—for mass working-class political unity and for eventual armed insurrection against the state.

Blames

The revolutionary character of the Congress movement today, Buthelezi blames on the ANC leadership in exile. Having once eagerly accepted their endorsement, he now ferociously condemns them as men who "drink whisky in safe places" while plotting how to attack fellow blacks. (*Guardian*, 30/9/85). Truly, 'there is no gratitude in politics'.

The UDF is attacked as a "slimy stepping-stone" for the ANC, and a "hyena". COSAS, he has said, "works among your children exhor-

Is this letter a forgery?

Ukaxisa: Nelson Mandela.

Dear Shange, Mncinankulu & Family,
Your warm message of goodwill and support tributed tremendously to my speedy and complete recovery. It gave me much strength and joy. I shake your hands very warmly.

Very sincerely,
Mncinankulu.

Pollsmoor Maximum Prison,
Dunale Barr X 4, Tlokai, 7766

The letter reproduced here was published in the *Sunday Times*, (19/1/1986). It was said to be from Nelson Mandela to Gatsha Buthelezi—addressing him by his tribal name, and signed "Madiba".

The *Sunday Times* noted that the tone was "warm", and commented that it "has given a new dimension to the strange relationship between the Chief and the ANC... doors never seem to be closed completely..."

"Mr Mandela, a politically shrewd man who by all accounts is perfectly in touch with what is happening in South Africa, must have realised that Chief Buthelezi could make his letter public and that its contents could be interpreted by many as a signal."

We are unaware of any public comment by the ANC leadership on this extraordinary revelation. Is the letter a forgery? If not, what does it represent?

We call on the ANC leadership to clarify the position at once.

ting them to lose their lives on the township streets. COSAS will fail and in failing will drag your children down with them, and destroy all the things you strive for." (*Star*, 26/11/85) So, on top of the banning of COSAS by Pretoria, the impis are sent to hunt and kill COSAS activists.

Now Buthelezi is obliged to take the offensive against the unions too—not 'because' Elijah Barayi attacked him in a speech, but because the very launching of COSATU is a deadly political challenge to him. It threatens to bury tribalism in the working class once and for all, through united struggle against the capitalists and the state.

Defeating Inkatha

All this supplies many clues to the underlying weakness of Buthelezi's position, and the basis of a strategy for defeating Inkatha.

In practice Buthelezi's collaboration with capitalism and with Pretoria can deliver nothing of substance by way of concessions to

the people of KwaZulu. However much he rants about the 'impossibility' of revolution, there is no alternative to revolution. In practice, faced with the real revolutionary movement of the workers and youth, he must inevitably expose himself, more and more openly, as a conscious agent of the very oppressors and exploiters from whom the impoverished Zulu masses demand liberation.

Out of this—if the COSATU, UDF and ANC leaderships approach the problem with a clearly worked-out policy and strategy for the youth and workers to implement—the point will be reached when KwaZulu rises against Inkatha, and even the impis turn their assegais against Buthelezi and his criminal gang.

In the last twelve years the international crisis of capitalism has led the bosses and their states to attack the standard of living of the working class everywhere. This has been done by lowering wages, lengthening working hours, cutting benefits and educational facilities, ignoring health and safety and worsening general conditions at work.

In SA this crisis has triggered waves of struggles. Workers have

understood the importance of unions as a weapon of struggle. Youth and community organisations have taken up struggles to defend or improve workers' standard of living alongside the unions.

The processes of capitalist crisis and working-class struggles have not eluded Natal/KwaZulu. The new period of industrial militancy was ushered in by the 1973 Durban strikes, and has found echoes throughout the region. The strike-breaking role of Inkatha has served to expose its anti-working class nature.

In addition, Buthelezi and Inkatha preside over and enforce atrocious social conditions in KwaZulu. This is the most densely populated bantustan with about four million people. In KwaZulu/Natal the proportion of African living in shacks has risen from about 10% in 1950 to about 50% by 1984.

More than 395 000 workers commute daily from their homes in KwaZulu to workplaces in Natal. The rising transport costs have led to huge struggles. In January 1984 more than 60 000 workers, commuting daily from Empangeni to Richards Bay, began a bus boycott. In Esikwani, 15 000 elected a committee of ten, eight of whom were active members of FOSATU unions in the area.

The overwhelming opinion in working-class townships in Natal/KwaZulu is that Inkatha has done nothing for them. That view was expressed by no less than 97% of people surveyed in Lamontville in 1984!

Atrocious

In KwaZulu health services are atrocious, worst of all in the rural areas. Most reported cases of cholera in the whole of SA are found there. Recent figures for KwaZulu showed one clinic for 24 000 people, while Transkei had one for 14 000. Such are the benefits brought by the 'liberation movement', Inkatha!

Buthelezi and Inkatha's role in forced removals has now become notorious: Malukazi, St. Wendolins, Lamontville, Hambanati....

While COSAS and youth organisations struggling for a non-racial education have been viciously attack-

COSATU prepares to take on Inkatha

City Press, (16/2/85) reports:

"Cosatu ... criticised the planned establishment of an alternative union federation by elements in Inkatha—slamming it as 'a move designed to undermine the unity of the working class in the face of massive attacks by the apartheid Government, big business and other enemies of the working class who would use tribalism and racism to divide the workers.'

"The CEC endorsed a statement by Natal delegates, saying that since Inkatha first announced its own union federation 'several incidents of violence against our membership and leadership had taken place.'

"Officials of Cosatu's affiliates in Newcastle and Vryheid have had their houses burnt, offices in Newcastle had been invaded and officials threatened with death.'

"The federation, with 500 shop stewards representing 75 000 organised and paid-up members in Natal, added: 'We would urge those elements who use violence against Cosatu to take note that Cosatu can and will defend itself and that the use of violence will eventually prove counter-productive for those using it against

Cosatu' ...

"On support for free enterprise—the planned Inkatha unions will support both free enterprise and foreign investment—Cosatu officials said they believe workers built the wealth of SA 'but the only reward we receive for our labour has been the starvation wages we earn.'

"'Even today', they said, 'wages of R20 a week are paid in Pieters, Isithebe and other parts of KwaZulu.'

"The statement added that for black workers the free enterprise system was built on the dispossession of the land from the majority by a minority. 'Free enterprise has been based on the denial of political rights to the majority of black people. Does Inkatha want us to support a system that has resulted in the enslavement and poverty of our people?'

"'Cosatu wants a society free from starvation and hunger, where there will be no malnutrition and kwashiorkor, where there is proper housing, medical care, and free education.' ...

"'So Cosatu demands a society where the wealth that is being created by the working class should be used to benefit all SA.'

ed, Buthelezi has implemented a racist education system in KwaZulu. Despite his claimed concern for 'education', KwaZulu spends even less per child than Pretoria spends on African education. The figure for KwaZulu is about R150, while in Bophutatswana it is R245, in Transkei R177, and in Ciskei R161.

Buthelezi is an ardent defender of the capitalist system—the system which enriches the privileged few and grinds the majority of working people in poverty. "I have come to the conclusion," he says, "that despite its faults the free enterprise capitalist system is the best economic system which man has ever devised." (*Weekly Mail*, 11-18 Oct 1985)

His argument that business won't invest in Natal if there are too many strikes means he is willing to allow the workers to be held to ransom by big business. Companies like Bata, BTR, Dunlop and Raleigh can rely on Buthelezi to act as the policeman of capitalism and help them exploit workers with poverty wages.

Buthelezi's claim to be the friend of trade unions has always been refuted by his real policies and actions. In 1983 he wrote an 'aide memoire' for discussion with the AFL-CIO, which spoke of "the urgent need to make (Inkatha's) power available to workers. Inkatha has always adopted the stance of support for the worker movements of the country."

He said that "action on the labour front suffers the terrible disadvantages of not being able to employ their full strength because they lack the essentials for supporting sustained action." As a solution, he offered the unions affiliation to Inkatha!

But this crocodile has different words for different audiences and occasions. He has repeatedly said that "trade unions are not a machinery for staging strikes, but for negotiation in order to avoid strikes."

Real struggles always bring out his reactionary role—e.g. over the Transvaal general strike in 1984; over the NUM wage dispute; over the Durban-Maritzburg consumer boycott; over BTR.... In each case he has alienated workers who formerly supported or tolerated him.

This fact has become apparent even to the financial press, which normally cannot praise Buthelezi highly enough. In November 1984, despite his attempts at strike-breaking, 90% of Zulu migrant

workers in five major factories supported the general strike. The *Financial Mail* (16/11/84) commented:

"Forced to choose between loyalty to Inkatha and their Unions many supported the stayaway. Inkatha Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's vocal opposition to the stay away call distances him even further from the mainstream of opposition in South Africa."

It is an historic advance that Buthelezi has now been driven into open opposition to the unions with his attacks on COSATU. More than anything, this will prepare the way for his defeat.

However, because of the state forces of coercion in KwaZulu, linked to the chiefs and sustained by central government, Inkatha's hold, especially in the rural areas, will not be easy to dislodge. The rapid collapse of Inkatha's support, for instance in the PWV triangle, will probably not be repeated so simply in KwaZulu itself.

Crimes

In all the unions, especially those with Inkatha members in their ranks, the role and crimes of Buthelezi and the Inkatha leadership need to be thoroughly explained and patiently discussed. But above all it is in action and through struggle that supporters of Buthelezi can most surely be won over, since it is then that he and Inkatha most clearly expose their true nature.

That requires well-prepared action campaigns in the region and nationally, both on democratic issues and on social issues—on wages, on housing, education, pensions, against removals etc.—where the responsibility of Inkatha for defending capitalism and government policies can best be brought to light.

It is essential that the unions and youth organisations work together in carrying such campaigns to the inactive mass of Inkatha members.

At the same time COSATU and the youth organisations of the UDF need to develop a co-ordinated policy of self-defence against Inkatha impis. Inkatha terror can only be smashed in this way. Even a few well-prepared physical blows struck against Inkatha from a defensive position, can do wonders in overcoming fear among

the people and so speed up its disintegration.

The defeat of Buthelezi and Inkatha can best be assured if the UDF in Natal is understood by the mass of Zulu workers, women and youth as a movement uniting black working people in an uncompromising struggle against capitalism.

Working-class character

The UDF's non-racial and non-tribal character can become a much more attractive force to win over present-day Inkatha supporters, with illusions in Zulu "nationhood", if it takes on a clear **working-class** and **anti-bourgeois** character.

The predominance in the UDF in Natal of leaders identified with capitalism, such as those of the NIC associated with the exploiting Indian merchant class, only plays into the hands of Buthelezi with his efforts to stir up Africans against 'Indians'.

If Indian bourgeois want to give money to the UDF and support it in other ways, well and good, but all claims to influence or leadership in our movement must be firmly denied to them. In fact, we should support calls for the disbanding of the NIC on the principle of opposing racially separate organisations. (In any event the NIC is reportedly supported by less than 5% of Indian residents surveyed by the IBR in Phoenix, Avoca, Chatsworth and Reservoir Hills!)

In Natal, it is a UDF built and led mainly by African and Indian **workers and youth** together—a UDF fighting shoulder to shoulder with COSATU, on a clear non-racial **socialist** basis—that will have the power to defeat Inkatha and draw the working masses of KwaZulu/Natal into a united revolutionary struggle for national liberation in South Africa.

As our movement nationally gains strength and effectiveness in the struggle against the bosses and the regime, as it becomes clear that the state **can** and ultimately **will** be overthrown, those oppressed working-class people who formerly looked to Inkatha as their 'liberation movement' will cast it aside, and can move forward to take their place among the best militant fighters in Congress ranks.

METAL INDUSTRY:

"The employers have declared war on us!"

The annual wage negotiations in the metal industry set the pace for wage increases throughout manufacturing. Over 250 delegates gather at industrial council meetings, which have become so large that town halls have to be hired to seat them.

Over the past year these negotiations have been in crisis, because of the refusal of the employers to concede to the unions' reasonable demands.

Wages have fallen far below prices, while thousands of jobs are being lost. The unions demanded higher wages, an end to retrenchments, and shorter working hours with no curbs on overtime.

But the attitude of the employers proved tougher than ever. **In the industrial council in April 1985, they refused to offer any wage increase, despite inflation rising above 16% and now approaching 20%.**

As Brother Vilane of MAWU concluded: "the employers have declared war with us as the workers in the metal industry."

War tests the strategies of the opposing armies to the limits. The aggressive attitude of the employers has forced MAWU in particular to reconsider its strategy.

MAWU members debated long and hard before deciding to join the industrial council in February 1983.

The union remained committed to shop-floor bargaining as a means of using particular advantages, like the local strength of the union or exceptional profitability in certain companies, to gain concessions that would not readily be made nationally—and then to use these concessions to improve the union's bargaining position in the struggle for improved minimum conditions across the industry.

But with the metal bosses united in SEIFSA, it was necessary to be able to mobilise **national strike action** to enforce common demands and build the cohesion of the union as a fighting force. Participation in the industrial council was seen as a way of providing a national focus for action

by Sam Parkin

should it become necessary.

To rule out any cosy relationship with the employers developing in the industrial council, the workers insisted that their delegates should be firmly mandated and controlled at every step. The aim was also, by giving a fighting lead, to enable MAWU to draw the workers of other metal unions represented in the industrial council into united opposition to the employers, despite the wavering of those unions' leaders.

There were good grounds for pursuing this approach—provided MAWU made thorough preparations for national action and did not become **reliant** on any temporary co-operation with conservative union leaders unwilling to fight.

The International Metal Federation council of metal unions in SA could add to the strength of the workers' struggle **only if it was used by MAWU as a bridge towards rank-and-file unity in action with the workers of other unions.** Otherwise the problem with such a body is that it leads to illusions of 'unity' between leaders of basically different outlook which falls to pieces as soon as a serious struggle is required.

This is what happened to the 'unity' of the IMF unions when met with the employers' harsh refusal to make concessions in 1985. The result has been at least a temporary setback for MAWU's strategy, and a retreat by the union to a strategy based once again on plant-by-plant struggles.

Fine words

Despite fine words, the leaders of other metal unions failed to put up any fight when the employers, after first refusing any increase, simply imposed a 17c increase at the bottom to bring the minimum wage to

R1.90/hour. In comparison, motor workers already earn a minimum of R2.50/hour.

The IMF unions, including MAWU, had begun by demanding R3.50/hour minimum wage and a 50c across the board increase. The employers' unilateral 'increase' is totally unacceptable to MAWU members, whose other demands were also ignored.

Sacrifices

The employers have pointed to the economic crisis and demanded sacrifices by workers "to save jobs". They are determined to make the workers pay yet again for the disease of the capitalist system.

The facts themselves contradict the bosses' arguments. Sacrifices imposed on the workers in 1983 and 1985 when there were no real wage increases have not stopped the destruction of jobs. In 1985 alone 23 000 jobs in the industry were lost. Over the past five years the total is 102 000 jobs lost.

The truth is that the metal bosses are taking advantage of unemployment and the threat of retrenchment to weaken the unions, cut wages and raise their profits.

This provides no way out of the crisis for the workers. The capitalists could well transfer their profits to the banks rather than re-invest in a stagnating or declining metal industry.

The retreat of the leaders of the other IMF unions has brought the entire weight of struggle against the employers onto the shoulders of MAWU. But that was what the union foresaw when it entered the industrial council: "We must ... show workers that only MAWU and unions like MAWU really fight for the oppressed workers." (FOSATU's pamphlet, *MAWU and the Industrial Council*, p.3)

All metal workers' eyes are now on



A report-back to MAWU shop stewards after the April 1985 Industrial Council negotiations.

MAWU to see how capable it is of leading effective action in an extremely tough situation.

The employers have launched a general attack against MAWU, aimed to defeat the union and prevent the pressures which are building up in the industry from blowing the whole industrial council structure apart.

The militant shop stewards' councils of MAWU responded to the lack of progress in negotiations by deciding to call a **national strike**. A referendum in the union to decide on strike action was started but then dropped. The MAWU leaders decided rather to turn once again to plant-by-plant negotiations.

Justification

Justification was sought in the fact that some of the employers seemed ready to negotiate and make concessions locally. Some metal companies have earned big profits even during the recession.

The turn towards plant bargaining on wages has run into formidable difficulties, however, which strengthen

the argument for national action.

Having refused concessions in national negotiations, SEIFSA concentrated all its energies on defeating attempts to bypass national negotiations.

It has aggressively united the employers to refuse to negotiate wage increases at plant level—an anti-union stand recently supported by the industrial court in the Hart case.

SEIFSA has exploited the unwillingness of the other union leaders to fight, and the isolation of MAWU in the industrial council, by offering negotiations sector by sector **at the industrial council**. It now claims there is no need for plant negotiations as fresh discussions are taking place at the industrial council table.

The response of the MAWU leadership has rightly been to declare "industrial action will happen when it suits us: not when it suits the employers."

In late September 1985, disputes were declared at 70 plants to lay the basis for legal strikes. A strike by 850 workers is now taking place at four plants of Asea, a 25% Swedish-owned company, in the hope of gaining some initial success. The tactic is to hit at a weak point in the

employers' lines with a legal strike at a foreign company, with the prospect of international union backing.

The union leadership has also apparently based this strategy of rolling strikes at individual plants on the fact that the industrial court did not rule out plant bargaining and had declared that strikes are legitimate weapons for workers.

Prepared

As workers prepared to strike at Asea, brother Bernie Fanaroff said, "We are assuming that the court will be prepared to protect the Asea workers and others if they take action". (*Financial Mail*, 15/11/85) It is very risky indeed to **rely**, in an important struggle, on anything other than the workers' own organised strength and capacity to sustain a fight.

Trade unionists internationally must be mobilised to give support to this struggle. But workers should be under no illusions about the ruthlessness of the bosses and the regime. If they are faced with a

challenge to their power, they will not be deflected by any past legal decisions.

Moreover, in any critical situation affecting the interests of the capitalist class or the state, the industrial court will do what it is told.

The metal workers could be faced with a battle as vicious as that of the BTR workers who remain dismissed despite undertaking a legal strike.

A major task facing the leadership will be to mobilise every metal worker to support this struggle. MAWU members cannot win this struggle alone. The MAWU activists have to make an approach to the broad ranks of the metal workers—as they did successfully at Highveld Steel in 1984—for **united** action (including white workers whose leaders opposed joint action).

One of the difficulties in separate plant-by-plant struggles over wages is that it is difficult to mobilise workers **nationally** in this way.

This is the case particularly when the mass of metal workers are facing huge problems in defending their jobs. MAWU will have to put forward clear national demands on wages and in defence of jobs to win the support of these workers, especially as the leaders of the other IMF unions are acting as obstacles to a united struggle.

The concern of those leaders to preserve their cosy position in the industrial council will not protect their members against the attacks of the employers and the cold winds of capitalist crisis. Falling wages and further massive retrenchments will also hit them severely.

Finding their leaders unwilling to

lead a fight in their defence, members of these unions will be attracted to the fighting position of MAWU—provided a clear national lead is given. They will either want to join MAWU or support campaigns to change their weak leadership.

MAWU may be able to make some partial gains through its present plant-by-plant tactics—Asea, for instance is now reported to have agreed to 'mediation'. While the union must be given full support in every one of these struggles, any gains will prove short-lived and inadequate to defend the union unless they are used deliberately to build a momentum towards **national action** by all metal workers on unified demands.

All the better if this fight is backed by the industrial power of COSATU, which can mobilise solidarity action especially if this is linked to a campaign for a specific **national minimum wage** for all South African workers.

Increasingly the workers are being confronted with the horrific results of the capitalist system in decay—unable to afford a living wage or guarantee a job, and depending for survival on a brutal racist dictatorship.

In every particular struggle it is necessary to explain the link between the workers' demands in the factories and the need to overthrow the bosses' system of capitalism.

But the confidence and strength to prepare for such a struggle can only come through uniting workers on the largest scale, in each industry, and in all industries together, as well as through international links.

The speech

Long after the 2 April 1985 meeting of the Industrial Council for the metal industry had ceased to be news, an interesting document came into our hands.

Marked "STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL", it contains the minutes of that eventful meeting in the Germiston City Hall.

Anything marked "confidential" by officialdom deserves the widest publicity. All the more here, since MAWU's policy is that **everything** that goes on in the Industrial Council should be reported to the workers.

Brass knuckles

This was the meeting where the employers put on their brass knuckles and declared they would give **no wage increase at all**. The minutes give the verbal exchanges between the employers' spokesman and the union representatives blow by blow.

Mr. Sam van Coller of SEIFSA started by pretending that the condition of the (capitalist) economy is a matter of shared concern to workers and bosses, and that workers should therefore accept further sacrifice to give this diseased system a chance to recover. (Not in quite those words!)

He pointed to the crisis and fierce competition in world steel and engineering; the weakness of the SA economy; the fallen rand, the rising cost of imports, the rampant inflation and spiralling unemployment.

Inflation had to be brought down or the SA economy would be sunk. Metal workers had to give the example in helping to cut the rising costs in industry. So they should accept a wage freeze!

Here was an opportunity to demolish the capitalist 'logic' of this arrogant employers' spokesman—and arm all union delegates with **socialist** arguments to carry to the membership and build confidence for the fight.

But the opportunity was thrown away.

Not surprisingly, union leaders who have accommodated themselves to capitalism as the 'natural' order fell straight into the trap set by Van



Fettling with a machine grinder.

Brother Fanaroff could have made

By Paul Storey

Coller.

In view of the crisis, conceded Ben Nicholson of CMBU, "it may be said that the trade union proposals (*which asked no more than compensation for inflation*) are unreasonable"—although they reflected the workers' basic needs! He asked for "sympathy".

Ike van der Watt of the Boilermakers (in the IMF council) stated that even a wage reduction could be considered, "if we had any proof" that it would bring down industry's costs. But he had "grave doubts" etc, etc.

Brother Jeffrey Vilane of MAWU, as expected, put up a stout defence of workers' demands. But even he, unfortunately, swam with the stream in trying to present the union's proposals as consistent with the employers' own interests.

Sister Jane Hlongwane of Steel, Engineering & Allied gave the toughest speech, denying any responsibility of workers for inflation and attacking the bosses' hypocrisy when their own salaries and perks are concerned. On government so-called 'overspending', however, she floundered—failing to point out that a massive increase of spending on workers' needs is essential and that this would be inflationary only under capitalism, not in a nationalised and planned economy run by the working class.

The crux of Van Coller's reply was this: In America there have been "substantial wage restraints ... and even ... wage reductions ... and we have certainly seen that economy come back with continuing economic growth and ... the economic situation turned around." Therefore, if workers in SA accepted wage cuts now, they could expect a bright future.

This man is paid a high salary for lying. During the period 1972-1982 real hourly wages in the US fell 13%. That was not a period of 'turn around' in that economy, but of crisis unprecedented since the Great Depression. Failure of the capitalists (as in SA) to invest in regenerating industry led to US manufacturing fall-

ing behind despite lower wages.

A world economy floating on credit led to galloping inflation. Stagnation of the world capitalist market—with 90% of trade in the grip of 500 monopolies—led to cut-throat competition, the slaughter of industries, mass unemployment and attacks on wages everywhere.

Wage cuts further cut the market and worsen the spiral of decline. If all countries cut wages to improve "competitiveness", how can any gain an advantage? Have France's austerity measures under Mitterand—admired by the capitalists—stopped the loss of 200 000 jobs a year? What of Chilean industry, devastated by the Chicago Boys' policy of cuts?

The US boom of the last two years (which may last a year or two longer) has been produced by record deficit spending (mainly massive spending on arms, including a projected \$1 500 billion on Star Wars)—precisely what Van Coller rejects for SA as inflationary.

Despite the \$200 billion annual deficit, US inflation has not yet rocketed but has come down, for two reasons. Firstly, the dollar was pushed high by record interest rates, and by capital flowing in to seek a haven against revolution and crisis abroad. Secondly, by the collapse of commodity prices, like tin, copper, cocoa, sugar, (and now oil), inflicted on the debt-ridden 'Third World' economies.

In the past 18 months, as a result, these countries have transferred wealth amounting to R275 billion to the rich countries as an enforced gift!

Reagan 'boom'

Even so, the Reagan 'boom' holds 35 million Americans below the poverty line (up more than 8 million in 4 years), along with industrial stagnation, a farm crisis, record bankruptcies, and over 80 bank failures in one year. Jobs are being 'created', not in industry, but in selling hamburgers and the like.

America's machine tool output in 'boom year' 1985 was less than half that of 1981; car production was 20%

below 1977.

The US and world economy is heading for a catastrophic crisis, which as bourgeois economists themselves concede could set in at any time.

When MAWU's Brother Bernie Fanaroff stepped forward to answer Van Coller, he could have used any of a thousand facts like these to smash the capitalist's lies—and show that no sacrifice by workers, but only socialist policies can rescue the industry or the country from disaster.

If unions accept a compromise, or avoid a fight, it should be solely because this is temporarily forced on them by the relationship of forces in an unrelenting war of the workers against the bosses. There should never be any concession to the idea that the workers and the bosses have a common interest where the fate of the industry is concerned.

Brother Fanaroff, regrettably, did not take this approach. He asked instead to be "convinced" of the "employers' sincerity in their desire to cut costs." He discussed "market forces" and appeared to put faith in import controls. He did not "believe" the link between wage costs and job losses had been "established".

Then, in conclusion, he made a statement almost incredible in its implications. If and when the wages and perks of Directors were cut; if government military and police spending were cut—if these were "sincerely" implemented—"then we will be in a position to go to our members and to say that Management has shown their sincerity and let us see whether we can do something too."

Mutual belt-tightening to save capitalism? Was that not the implication intended?

This offer—which was not reported in *Umbiko we MAWU*—can certainly not have been the result of any mandate from the workers.

In the metal industry, as in the workers' movement generally, the struggle for a decent life and for an end to exploitation and oppression can be carried forward only by a conscious intransigent struggle against capitalism, and not by any concessions, express or implied, to its legitimacy.

BTR workers in Britain say:

BTR, the British-based multinational, sacked 1 000 black workers at Sarmcol in Howick in May 1985. Their struggle for reinstatement and recognition of their union, the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) continues.

Campaigning work in the British labour movement is beginning to attract support from shop stewards and workers at BTR plants there, highlighting the need for more international direct links.

RAY HOWLEY, union convenor at BTR's Greengate Polymer Coatings plant in Manchester, General Municipal Boilermakers & Allied Trades Union branch chairman and member of GMBATU North-West Regional Council, spoke to DANIEL HUGO about conditions at BTR in Britain:

BTR is a group of companies under one banner which are supposed to be autonomous. Silvertown House (BTR headquarters) is only supposed to provide the companies with back-up.

In fact many people believe that Silvertown House actually issues rules to the companies which are kept under the desk. We as a union try to negotiate locally with the companies, but you can't do that if the decisions aren't made locally. And BTR refuses to negotiate nationally.

Take wages. When we negotiate locally management always insists that their offer is one-off in the plant. But it seems that the same kind of ceiling is operating throughout the country. Are we really negotiating with the people that we should be negotiating with?

BTR's tactics were shown up graphically with the takeover of Dunlop last year. At Dunlop there was a good national negotiating body under GMBATU. BTR's first step was to do away with it.

The union wrote BTR a letter, asking them to negotiate nationally. They refused. They said the company had been broken up into its 'compo-

nent parts'. Then they did away with the redundancy payment scheme in each 'component part'. Letters were sent out in each company in September, saying that the scheme would be finishing.

Management told the union: "We made the decision ourselves. It wasn't a national thing." If it wasn't a national thing, why did it happen throughout Dunlop at the same time?

In GMBATU we wanted to take *them on over this*. The problem is that there were six unions involved. We took a strike ballot and got an overall majority in favour of strike action. But due to policies followed by different unions with regard to majorities for strike action, no strike was called. And due to the indecision of the leadership, no action has been taken up to this time.

So BTR's strategy seems to be working well. It takes groups over, then splits them up. It agrees to have local negotiations only. That is the major problem we face.

Have the unions found a way of fighting back?

No. The unions are in a bad position at the moment. Many of the

leaders would seem to be scared to death. They've seen the NGA (print union) and the miners and other groups beaten—in fact they stood by and let it happen. This has put the employers in a stronger position.

On top of it, Thatcher has been giving support to the employers with her anti-trade union laws. We'll have to do something. If we don't, we'll be lost.

What do you think should be done?

A lot of people tell us what we should be doing, and sometimes they've got good ideas. Take the question of South Africa, and refusing to do work for the companies down there. I found out that our company was doing work for Sarmcol. When I approached the membership about it, there was indifference at first.

The reason is that we haven't got a solid policy on South Africa in the union. The leadership say a lot of high-minded things about South Africa, but there is no clear policy on what we should be doing.



MAWU organises bread distribution for BTR strikers.

"OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA MUST TALK TO US"



Union theatre at a shop stewards rally in Howick, Natal.

Some trade union leaders would have us believe that any action in support of our brothers and sisters in South Africa would be breaking the law. So nothing is done! It seems to be TUC and Labour Party policy to stay within the law at all costs. But unless we are willing to stand up, we'll keep on being the losers.

What do you think about the struggle of the workers at Sarmcol in South Africa?

I think the situation down there is symptomatic of what a company like BTR does. It's exactly the same thing as here, except that they don't yet have the same repressive laws to use against us in this country.

I'm hoping that we'll be able to go from financial and moral support for the workers in South Africa to action on the shop floor.

The first problem would be to set up a national negotiating body which

BTR would actually talk to. Some people have been working hard to build it up. This would make it possible to co-ordinate action. Once we do it, we'll be able to move much more effectively.

In BTR the thoughts of a lot of people go out to Sarmcol. We have a hell of a lot of admiration for them, it's a hell of a struggle they are waging. In fact, we should be learning from them. They are showing us what trade unionism is all about.

A lot of trade unionists are despairing here in Britain, because we seem to be getting beaten all the time. We can say that we're having it hard at the moment, but in South Africa it's a lot bloody harder.

What really fills us with admiration is that they've got the regime on the run—ordinary shop-floor workers. Maybe we can teach them something about organisation and structures. But they can certainly teach us how grass-roots trade unionism really

works.

Do you think shop-floor workers at BTR in Britain can put real pressure on management over the Sarmcol issue?

The biggest problem is that people tend to slog away at their jobs, and don't want to know about things which they think don't concern them. But when they are faced clearly with an issue, they rise to the occasion. Take Ethiopia—once people saw things on the television, they put their hands into their pockets.

It's the same with Sarmcol. Our brothers and sisters in South Africa will have to talk to us. We must be able to convey the reality of what is happening to our people on the shop floor. We must be able to let them know what's going on. Management and the establishment won't do it because it's not in their interests. We must find our own ways of doing it.

SANCTIONS AND DISINVESTMENT

—Isolate the bosses!

—Build links between workers!

Disinvestment and sanctions against South Africa have been hotly debated—in the bosses' press at home and overseas, as well as inside the workers' movement.

Can economic sanctions contribute to forcing change in SA? Should the trade unions support a campaign to get foreign companies to disinvest? Won't this merely increase black unemployment and harden the resistance of the right-wing racists?

Big business has all along opposed sanctions, hypocritically arguing that they will hurt black workers. Effective economic sanctions or large-scale disinvestment, they point out, would lead to more jobs being lost in South Africa and more hardship for the people in the surrounding countries.

Such arguments are used by the capitalists at their convenience. When the multi-national corporations in SA introduce new technology and then mercilessly throw thousands of workers out of jobs, they don't speak of "black workers suffering".

Burdens

Both when the capitalists invest and when they 'disinvest', the experience of workers is that they are made to bear the burdens of the capitalist system.

The question for workers is whether sanctions and disinvestment, whatever additional suffering they may entail, would lead to the apartheid regime collapsing or being overthrown sooner—for that is the only route towards ending the workers' suffering.

Few black people now believe the story of the businessmen and the

by L. Reed

press that capitalism is a "force for good" contributing to higher living standards for the workers, expanded job opportunities and the removal of apartheid.

The survey by Mark Orkin of CASE (in conjunction with the IBR), found that three-quarters of all blacks in SA support socialism! 73% favoured some form of disinvestment. A Markinor poll found 77% of urban blacks supported sanctions to get rid of apartheid.

Nevertheless, opinion surveys reflect the thinking of people in only a superficial way. While the revolutionary mass movement over the past eighteen months has undoubtedly radicalised black working-class opinion on these issues, it would be wrong to imagine that all the complicated questions involved in sanctions and disinvestment are resolved.

At the end of 1984, Prof. Schlemmer (an avowed supporter of capitalism and foreign investment) claimed to find that only 26% of production workers in SA thought disinvestment a good thing. He got this result by implying in the survey that the choice was between getting more jobs through foreign investment or merely frightening the government through disinvestment.

In fact, a central issue as far as workers are concerned is: **Can sanctions and disinvestment be an effective weapon against the regime? Also: Who should we be relying on overseas to support our struggle?** These questions need much more discussion in our movement, so that there can be clarity and unity of approach among workers.

Over the past two years, the leaders of the independent unions in SA have

come out more fully in favour of international pressure for sanctions and disinvestment, reflecting the view of most of the advanced, organised workers.

In an international policy statement in June 1984, FOSATU declared that it "fully supports international pressure on South Africa to bring about social justice and a truly democratic society." Despite the Federation's concern with the jobs and livelihoods of its members, "it is FOSATU's considered view that the pressure for disinvestment has had a positive effect and should therefore not be lessened."

Congress

At its founding congress late last year, COSATU resolved "that all forms of international pressure on the South African government—including disinvestment or the threat of disinvestment—is an essential and effective form of pressure on the South African regime and we support it." Furthermore, "if this government remains intransigent in its racist, anti-democratic and anti-worker practices, then this pressure will have to increase as an act of solidarity with our struggle for liberation from exploitation and oppression."

COSATU committed itself "to the principle of international working class solidarity as the most powerful form of solidarity action with our struggle."

As an immediate practical policy, both the FOSATU statement and the COSATU resolution put forward a correct line. However, both also reveal elements of ambiguity in the policy which could lead to confusion in future if they are not clarified.



Anti-apartheid demonstration in Trafalgar Square, London.

On the issue of sanctions and disinvestment, as on all issues that we have to grapple with, the key thing is to proceed from clear and firm principles, class analysis and perspectives—and then, from that foundation, apply tactics in a flexible way.

First of all, “**pressure**”—whether national or international—cannot “bring about social justice and a truly democratic society” in South Africa. That can be done only by **revolution**—specifically by working-class revolution leading to workers’ democratic rule.

Nevertheless, in preparing and building for revolution, we can and should use a whole variety of pressures which may hamstring or weaken the enemy and limit the scope for its blows and manoeuvres against our movement.

Secondly, because it is upon revolution, and nothing less, that workers ought to put their faith, we must at all times draw the clearest distinction between our class enemy, the **capitalists** at home and overseas (who are mortally terrified of revolution), and our **class brothers and sisters in all countries** (who have nothing to lose and much to gain

from a victory of the working class in South Africa).

The COSATU resolution supplies the key in committing itself “to the principle of international working class solidarity action as the most powerful form”—we would add: and the only **reliable** basis—“of solidarity action with our struggles.

Sharp distinction

If this idea is followed consistently, it would lead to a **sharp distinction of attitude** in our movement towards, on the one hand, the foreign capitalists who (under pressure) may disinvest or through their governments impose some sanctions against South Africa, and, on the other hand, those forces (primarily of the working class) **who can mount effective pressure for disinvestment and themselves enforce sanctions against the apartheid regime.**

There should never be even an implication of support or sympathy on the part of our movement for any section of the capitalist class in whatever it may do. Our policy must

be **not** to appeal to the bosses and their governments for assistance (that can only mislead workers to put trust in treacherous liberals), but to mobilise a working-class based movement everywhere against capitalism.

If foreign capitalists themselves impose sanctions against SA, it is not out of sympathy for workers, black or white. If they act in this way, it is as a **by-product** of and response to our revolutionary movement—a result of their fear of revolution and their hope to find an alternative which they think may pacify us.

Thirdly, the “effectiveness” of sanctions, disinvestment and other external pressures on the SA regime, **will not remain the same, or necessarily increase, under all conditions in the future.**

Insofar as sanctions are imposed by the capitalists and their governments, we must combat all illusions among workers that these can be **relied on.**

While the naive belief prevails in ruling-class circles inside SA (including within the regime) and overseas, that the apartheid system can be ‘reformed’ from above to the point where revolution can be averted through compromise—so long can



Anti-apartheid demonstrators in Berkeley, California, U.S.

partial economic measures 'against' South Africa, undertaken by SA's capitalist allies, have a **certain effect** in restraining state reaction or inducing the apartheid regime to make partial concessions (to the unions, for instance) which it might otherwise have resisted longer.

But when the revolutionary challenge of the black working class in SA rises to much greater heights than yet achieved—when the fate of capitalism itself is plainly at stake—there will be immense, though more or less secret and underhand, efforts undertaken (including by elements among the imperialists who have previously gone along with limited sanctions as 'pressure' on the SA regime) then to prop the regime up and stave off a workers' victory at all costs.

It is revolution, not apartheid, that the bourgeoisie internationally hates. They want reforms today to avert revolution. Tomorrow (although constrained by political pressures in their own countries and world-wide), they will just as determinedly favour the triumph of **reaction**. For the organised workers to see the 'support' of even the most liberal capitalists as inherently **conditional, unreliable and treacherous** is the most important thing in working out a policy on sanctions, etc.

We are certainly pleased to see anything which weakens the ability of the SA regime to repress our movement; any pressure which causes it, however partially, to retreat; any divisions among the capitalists which undermine their morale and give the

workers confidence in future victory.

But it is only upon the strength of our own class—and only upon sanctions imposed and implemented by the organised force of the international workers' movement—that we can ultimately rely. This should be made clear in all calls for sanctions and other "pressure" against South Africa.

Self-interest

Disinvestment itself has resulted from **economic self-interest** on the part of foreign capitalists, combined with **political opportunism** when faced by revolutionary unrest in SA and vigorous mass pressure from unions and anti-apartheid groups abroad.

SA is integrally linked with the world economy. The world capitalist economy is controlled by banks and multi-nationals on the basis of profit. Profit is their essential concern.

All the wealth of the capitalists—all the machinery and plant—is created by the international working class and comes into the hands of the capitalists as **capital** which they just push around the world as they think fit. If it suits them they quite happily close plants and put millions of jobs at risk.

When we look at the movement of capital in or out of SA, foreign companies (there are 1 200 British and 300 US companies alone in this country) have over £31.5 billion invested. This is based on what is profitable to

each company, whether it is short- or long-term investment.

How attractive is it to invest in SA? At the end of 1984, Frost Sullivan, New York 'political risk consultants', dropped South Africa from one of the safest countries for investment to a par with some of the higher risk 'third world' countries.

In the last four years, economic growth has been negative. The country now has a \$24 billion debt, equivalent to Chile's debt. 66% is short-term, although most of this has recently been rescheduled.

At a recent 'Investment in 1986' conference, Chris Ball, Barclays managing director, said: "SA has been stagnating economically, not for two years nor four years but for 15 years, with the constraint still tightening."

Inflation is around 20%—four to six times that of SA's major trading partners, making its products less competitive. 9 companies go bankrupt daily. Massive retrenchments occur.

Black unemployment has rocketed to an estimated 25-30% nationally and 56% (with youth unemployment as high as 80%) in some areas like Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage, which has been so de-industrialised that the motor industry is a ghost industry.

In 1980 the average return on foreign investment was 20%; now it is only 5%. In 1984, investment in manufacturing was 40% lower than in 1980. 67 000 jobs were lost between the third quarter of 1984 and March 1985, 32 000 of them in manufacturing.

Over the last 9 years there has been no net rise in black employment. With unemployment already at 3 million or more, 250 000 black youth enter the labour market annually with no prospect of a job. With this bleak future it is not surprising that youth have boycotted schools and not written exams. Even whites are beginning to be hard hit, with unemployment officially triple that of 1984.

With the economy in such a mess, and investment no longer giving above average returns, many foreign companies have been selling off their assets in SA and getting out.

Since 1980, 30 US companies have left. Many British companies have also withdrawn or reduced their majority stake.

Thousands of textile workers have been laid off. The only new textile investment is from multi-nationals



It is revolution, not apartheid, that the international capitalists hate

moving out of the Philippines to the new 'free trade zone' of the Ciskei, where trade unionists are banned or murdered. Already some international companies and retail stores are refusing to place new orders with South African textile manufacturers on account of protectionist pressure in their own countries linked with calls to boycott SA goods.

For many foreign capitalists, Botha's speech to the Natal N.P. congress last August marked a turning point. Fearing to show weakness in the face of the growing mass movement, he refused to announce further 'reforms' and so raised renewed fears among investors that revolution was inevitable.

When Botha warned, "Don't push us too far", the rand fell to an all-time low—38.5 cents to the US dollar; some countries imposed limited sanctions and recalled their ambassadors for 'consultation'; capital seemed to be flying out of the country; and international banks demanded repayment of their debts.

Apparently, one speech by Botha had brought about what the sanctions campaign had been unable to achieve over 25 years!

The reason for this public flight of capital from SA was "that no businessman wants to be caught pro-

pping up a government whose social policy leads to the sjambokking and shooting of people on television—so, eventually to money-losing revolution." (*Economist*, 7/9/85. Our emphasis.)

A new situation has arisen. What seemed crucial factors six months ago, such as SA's strategic situation in respect of minerals and geographical situation, have for the present been overtaken by other concerns. Even factors such as British capitalists' investment of over £11 billion in SA as well as the £1.2 billion of exports to SA are no longer determining factors for sustaining foreign investment.

The sheer tenacity of the revolutionary movement in South Africa over more than a year; the horrifying brutality of the apartheid regime in the constant massacres reported and witnessed night by night on television screens in Europe, America and worldwide—these produced a sea-change in attitudes among the mass of people towards SA.

In turn, that has compelled sections of the capitalist class internationally, as well as imperialist governments, to proclaim more open 'opposition' to the Pretoria regime.

In September 1985 Reagan suddenly signed a presidential order bann-

ing the export of US computers to SA agencies that enforce apartheid; prohibiting most transfers of nuclear technology; ending the importation of Krugerrands; and restricting some loans to the SA government. Reagan, the most reactionary US President for decades and a close ally of Pretoria, is certainly not doing this for humanitarian reasons.

Instead the limited sanctions (most of them simple enough for SA to get round) were aimed to avoid stricter sanctions demanded by many Americans outraged over the misery, violence and injustice of apartheid. Pressure through the unions and through public demonstrations had led to legislative moves in Congress which Reagan was anxious to prevent.

He could no longer hide behind "codes of conduct" and talk of "constructive engagement" when the oppression of black people in SA was obviously going from bad to worse. **But this does not mean that really effective or crippling sanctions will be imposed either by the US or other imperialist powers acting together.**

Such sanctions as have been imposed have a certain damaging effect on the SA economy and on business confidence, and do cause the Botha regime to worry—especially when

negotiating over its foreign debts—that overseas pressures might be stepped up. But the imperialists always leave enough loopholes in their measures to ensure that the SA regime and ruling class can get round them with the aid of their trading partners and financiers abroad.

The intentional toothlessness of the so-called 'United Nations' and its impotent resolutions have long made this body a joke. In 1963 the UN Security Council imposed a mandatory arms embargo, which has not stopped the movement of arms to SA or the development by SA of its own arms industry—which now exports arms.

The oil embargo imposed by OPEC countries was first circumvented through Iran under the Shah. Today South Africa still receives oil from sources in the Gulf. The *Salem* scandal showed a glimpse of various measures used to beat the embargo. With the present oil glut and desperate efforts of oil-producing countries to sell it, South Africa can find many sources of supply—at a price.

There is no effective international machinery to enforce an embargo—and such machinery **cannot and will not** be created by the ruling classes internationally, who in any case have **no desire** to make sanctions against SA effective enough to actually contribute to the overthrow of the regime.

Meanwhile the SA government has been developing SASOL, to manufacture oil from coal as an extra insurance, and oil has been stored in sizeable quantities in disused mine shafts. This has been at some cost.

The Amsterdam Shipping Research Bureau showed that the oil embargo costs the SA government R5 billion per year—R3 billion on crude oil and R2 billion on circumventing the embargo by using false destinations, and keeping secret all calls by oil tankers to South African ports.

In addition, costs of importing oil have jumped dramatically as the value of the rand has plummeted, outstripping the recent fall in the crude oil price. To meet rising fuel costs, the government has continually forced the price of petrol up—bringing the overall price increase to 60% in 1985.

Thus oil sanctions impose a certain 'cost' to the SA ruling class—but it is a 'manageable' cost: these limited measures do not and will not cripple



Dunnes' supermarket workers on strike in Ireland.

the economy.

A similar situation holds in respect of bans or restrictions on investment or loans. A report by Sutcliffe and Wellings of the University of Natal points out: "The proportion of new capital formation financed from foreign investment has fallen from 35% over the period 1946-55, to 17% over 1966-77, to about 10% in the last 10 years." (*Star*, 4/7/85) ITV's *Weekend World* programme in Britain recently reported that foreign investment now makes up only 1½% of new investment in SA.

Foreign investment is likely to continue to stagnate, or decline—because of falling profit rates and the political risks. But most of the disinvestment consists in off-loading foreign shares rather than withdrawing plant. And most of these shares are bought up by SA companies out of the considerable amounts of uninvested capital available in the country.

With the fall-off in direct investment, SA capitalism has built up increasing debt to the big imperialist banks in the form of loans—about \$24 billion at the present, much of it short-term debt.

Much publicity has been given to the "leverage" this gives to the bankers over Botha—by refusing to issue new loans or "roll over" old ones. Indeed, last year the regime had

to suspend most interest repayments and seek a rescheduling of loans—because the falling rand had increased the expense of repayments. But, despite all the talk, this rescheduling is being successfully negotiated.

In reality, the banks are dependent for their profits on securing repayment, just as much as SA capitalism is dependent on the loans. To get repayment, the banks will also have to extend new loans. Neither the regime nor private SA capitalists will be deprived of access to the vast quantities of finance capital floating around the world—even though the terms may be more costly, the loans more short-term, and the deals increasingly secret.

Powers

Thus it is obvious that sanctions against SA by the capitalist powers—invariably imposed as half-measures or gestures to 'public opinion'—do have some effect in worsening the crisis of the SA economy and this weakening the base of the regime. But it would be wrong to cultivate any illusion among workers that these can be relied on to

bring about real change.

On the contrary, the **limitation** and **ineffectiveness** of sanctions 'imposed' by the ruling class should be fully exposed—and contrasted with the **necessity** and **possibility** of bringing about effective sanctions and other solidarity action through **building the international unity of the working class**.

If this is not brought out clearly, then the regime may be able later on to sow doubts with its propaganda even among workers who **now** are prepared to support the idea of 'sanctions'—by the UN, by the EEC, by the USA, etc.—in the belief that whatever additional economic hardship workers have to bear will prove worthwhile as contributing to liberation.

Solidarity

In the anti-apartheid solidarity campaigns overseas, a wide variety of approaches, often involving superficially attractive but confused ideas, are put forward on the issue of sanctions. These range from individuals boycotting South African fruit, to naive moral **appeals** to capitalist governments for far-reaching measures aimed at the total banning by law of trade and other links with SA.

In the past period in South Africa, consumer boycotts have been developed as an effective means of exerting pressure by working-class communities. But the key to success has been total mass solidarity plus collective enforcement against boycott-breakers.

Overseas, boycotting SA fruit is aimed at the individual consumer's conscience. Buying, instead of an Outspan orange, an orange from Zionist Israel or perhaps Pinochet's Chile, the person feels he or she has 'done something' against apartheid—without being drawn into **collective action** in a way which can raise consciousness and make a specific impact that can be seen and felt.

In contrast, the action which was taken by the Irish Dunnes' supermarket workers against handling SA goods and their attempts to build links with CCAWUSA and the Food and Canning Workers' Union, shows the willingness of workers to take

firm action and sacrifice even their jobs in support of the struggle of oppressed and exploited people in other countries.

But the Dunnes' strike also brought out the central problem which workers face. These courageous shop workers took action and sustained it for more than seventeen months in response to policy of their union not to handle SA goods. But when it came to the crunch, the leadership **totally failed** to back the strike by mobilising solidarity action, and shamefully ended up calling it off officially without even allowing the Dunnes' strikers a say!

The reformist leadership of the labour movement abroad has spent its time in the past simply passing pious resolutions and has not tried to organise a campaign to put muscle behind their words. Many officials merely endorse decisions of the United Nations rather than taking independent class action and seriously building links with South African workers, which the non-racial trade unions have asked for.

However, there have been some actions, usually prompted by pressure from the rank and file, which show the **potential** for a tremendous campaign of action by unions worldwide—both to support SA workers in **specific disputes**, and to fight generally to cut off all imperialist aid and links to the SA bosses and regime.

Transport unions in Australia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark have refused at different times to handle SA imports and exports. Postal workers in Australia and Finland have taken temporary action against handling SA mail.

In July 1985, the action of British dockworkers, belonging to the Transport and General Workers' Union, in Southampton, prevented the loading of a container with computer equipment for South Africa's military manufacturer, Atlas.

Workers overseas have also seen how effective was the strike by 3 500 Volkswagen workers in SA; which tipped the scales against the New Zealand rugby tour when the workers *refused to allow the company to supply mini-buses for it*. The strikers declared their opposition to "international links which do not further the interests of the oppressed in South Africa." The tour was cancelled.

However, trade unionists must de-

mand that union leaders overseas now back up their solidarity resolutions with action. For example, despite the 1985 resolution by the British National Union of Seamen at the conference of Maritime Unions Against Apartheid, backed by the UN, which called for unions to take direct action to ensure that no oil reaches South Africa, little, if any, action has been taken amongst dockworkers to try and ensure its success.

Pension funds of universities, local government, unions, etc., are under a lot of pressure to sell SA shares or remove accounts from Barclays Bank. But this simply involves shifting finance around, often to a more profitable area.

While we would generally give support to such campaigns, they can become a soft option for students who should be actively working in and through the labour movement—taking up strike support funds for SA workers, solidarity actions against multi-nationals engaged in labour disputes in SA, and mobilising workers in protests against detentions and killings by the apartheid regime.

Education campaign

There should be a campaign of mass education by the unions overseas to mobilise support for COSATU and build direct links at all levels with the COSATU unions.

Visits should be organised from South African trade union activists to meet rank and file workers to discuss common experiences and struggles, and to prepare for harder struggles ahead.

Education campaigns at every workplace on the struggles in South Africa would mean maximum support and action, not simply resolutions, when South African workers go on strike. Shop steward combines covering workers in different trade unions but in one multi-national should be set up.

In Britain 250 000 jobs are said to depend on trade with South Africa. In fighting against economic ties with South Africa, trade unions must insist on no redundancies as a result. The capitalists, not the workers, must be made to pay. There must be an active campaign throughout the labour movement on this, so that no worker

fears losing his or her job through joining the fight against apartheid.

The ineffectiveness of the sanctions campaign against Rhodesia should be explained in the labour movement as partly the result of the role of the British Labour Party leaders in government.

When a Labour government is returned to power (or, in Europe, if there is a Socialist Party government), a mass campaign should be launched by youth and trade unionists explaining that what is needed for effective sanctions is to nationalise the companies and banks involved in South Africa and bring them under workers' control and management.

This would link up with the resolution of COSATU on disinvestment, which committed the unions "to ensure that the social wealth of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa for the benefit of all."

The word "remains" is inappropriate here since the wealth of SA is today the property **not** of the people of SA **but** of a rich few. But the idea is clear.

Workers' labour

While fighting to isolate the SA regime and cut off its lines of foreign economic support, **we do not accept** the 'right' of the capitalists to do what they please with the wealth created by the workers' labour. It must belong to the people as a whole.

More and more workers see capitalism and apartheid as two sides of the same bloody coin. The only guarantee of basic democratic rights, a job, a house, and decent education will be through the working class taking power and nationalising the mines, big businesses and farms. Then workers will control investment and production, and jobs will be guaranteed for all.

Only by **bas**ing the organising of sanctions on **workers' unity internationally**, and on a common struggle for workers' power and socialism, can the long-term interests and needs of the people be assured.

Workers' unity and solidarity action is also the only way to defend the people of the Southern African coun-

tries against the threats to them by the SA regime if effective sanctions were to be imposed.

On 11 November the Minister of Manpower, du Plessis, said the repatriation of migrant workers was essential "as part of the government's overall long and short-term strategy for relieving unemployment in the face of disinvestment, sanctions and boycotts."

At present the regime is using this and other pressures both to try and divide the working class, and to bargain over sanctions. An estimated two million migrant workers from other countries are in SA, most of them 'illegally'. 104 000 migrant workers are from Lesotho, with their remittances totalling 51% of that country's GNP. Repatriation would have a devastating effect on all the Southern African countries, including Lesotho.

The NUM has warned that "threats to repatriate migrant workers ... will not be taken lightly by the union." In defence of their members and of all mineworkers they would call a national strike. The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, which represents 8 700 coal mine workers at Secunda, has already given this strike call their backing and all COSATU unions should be prepared to take solidarity action.

The NUM has also threatened strike action if jobs are cut as a result of coal boycotts. This lead to fight every redundancy or plant closure must be taken up by COSATU and used as an opportunity to educate, win more members among migrant workers, and prepare for future struggles.

The only protection of the whole working class, both in South Africa and Southern Africa, will be through building a mass fighting COSATU and building links between workers in the region and internationally.

The NUM's initiative for a Southern African mine workers' federation is a good example, provided links are not confined to the officials of unions in the neighbouring countries (many of whom are conservative and corrupt bureaucrats), but carried to the membership.

The regime's threat to punish workers if sanctions are imposed shows that there is **no painless way** of fighting for our liberation.

In fact, it would be quite mistaken to imagine (as is put forward by the

ANC leadership at the present time) that sanctions can provide some kind of **alternative** to revolution or civil war in South Africa. Comrade Oliver Tambo, in his interview with Anthony Heard (*Cape Times*, 4/11/85), said— "the way we look at it is this: the more effective the sanctions are, the less the scope and scale of conflict."

The assumption is that, by totally isolating South Africa and removing international economic and other support, the racist regime can be forced to concede power through negotiations to the black majority. There are, in fact, no grounds for believing that even a crippling economic crisis would lead to the capitulation of the SA state.

Crisis

What is most likely to happen as the crisis (political and economic) in SA becomes really acute—something that will develop **ultimately** with or without sanctions—is that a **more right-wing regime**, possibly a direct military-police dictatorship, would come to power. This would be accompanied by even more virulent white racist reaction. The "scope and scale of conflict" would not be reduced.

Capitalists openly opposed to sanctions point to such a 'scenario' in their argument against them. **In reality this is not an argument against sanctions.**

The route to the overthrow of apartheid will **inevitably** involve grappling head-on with vicious racist reaction, centred on the state and prepared to use methods of outright civil war against our movement. It is essential that the leaders of the movement should make this reality clear and not disguise it from the people.

The task for the black working class, however, is to arm itself politically, organisationally, and finally with weapons, to meet that challenge. In so doing, let us organise **the most effective possible sanctions and other solidarity action by our class brothers and sisters internationally to weaken our class enemy at home and abroad and prepare the ground for revolution.**

Letter from a "group of 55"

We are publishing the following letter with some slight alterations where it refers to organisational matters. This is for security reasons. Nothing of a political character has been changed.

To the editor and supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC:

Revolutionary greetings.

We are a group of 55 workers, unemployed people and students in the Transvaal who have regularly and conscientiously circulated and discussed your publications. We have found much that is valuable. Yet, we have been very disturbed by your latest journal (nos. 16-17, Jan.-June '85).

The members of our group place a high premium on theory. We meet regularly to discuss revolutionary theory and our practical intervention in mass struggles. One of the publications used in our study groups is *South Africa's Impending Socialist Revolution* (produced by *Inqaba*).

The precondition for being a member of our group is practical involvement. Put another way, all our comrades must be involved in practical work to further the revolutionary struggle. You will find us in unions like (either as officials or members) NUM, MAWU, CCAWUSA, CUSA and AZACTU affiliates. In civics, youth organisations and student organisations. In many cases we have been responsible for forming grassroot organisations in our areas.

Some of our members play an overt role in mass "political" organisations. In affiliates of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and in constituent organisations of the National Forum (NF). As a group we do not operate openly. We have as our aim the building and strengthening of a non-Stalinist left.

Although theoretically we have much in common with your tendency, we also have some differences with you. The differences are over the national question (preferring the analysis of No Sizwe) and strategically over working in the ANC and UDF.

The latter might sound as a contradiction to you since we have already said some of our comrades are in the UDF. Let us explain. A few of our com-

rades found themselves in organisations before the UDF was formed. These organisations later affiliated to the UDF. Some comrades were later expelled from these organisations (for reasons similar to the expulsion of some *Inqaba* supporters from the ANC).

It must be said that Stalinist tactics like physical force were used on these comrades—in one case contributing to the death of a comrade—we have ample proof of this. Others tread a very careful path and remain in the UDF. Their position is being reviewed by the comrades concerned and by us as a group.

Their involvement in organisations affiliated to the UDF is monitored and effectively curtailed through undemocratic and gangster-like practices by leading members in the UDF. These members use demagoguery and have succeeded to a certain extent in misguiding a large section of youth because of the low level of socialist consciousness.

By and large the "socialists" in the UDF you talk about in your publication (and in a few instances mention by name) are of a very vulgar sort. These are the same "socialists" who unquestioningly toe the line from Lusaka. Firm and ardent supporters of the bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union and the military in Poland (they have frequently condemned Solidarity).

These "socialists" of the UDF, the leadership of the UDF, and some misguided elements found in the rank and file are the real sectarian elements in the liberation movement. Nevertheless, in spite of the great obstacles, we work with and address supporters of the UDF when possible.

Through practice and contrary to what you said in your publication we have found that the NF is much less sectarian. We have found that the "socialist" "rhetoric" of the NF (your phrase) is more than just hot air. It sometimes seems that your publication is competing with the Stalinists of the *African Communist* and *Sechaba* in denouncing NF.

Although we have problems with BC (black consciousness) we do recognise that AZAPO has changed for the better in the last while. The dynamic within AZAPO continues. For us it is vital to work with NF. One immediate correction is needed here, NF is a forum not an organisation. Neither is it BC. There are other important socialist currents participating in NF. Similarly we

would like to work with UDF.

NF does face problems, the major one being the lack of funds. We know that the UDF is pumped with millions of rands from their liberal, social democratic and Stalinist supporters overseas. Their popular support is partly due to this. Yet, as you have admitted, numerical size although important does not determine whether an organisation is revolutionary or not.

We agree with the Azanian Manifesto (a document you seem to ignore) which stresses independent worker organisations and their involvement in the struggle for socialism. There is a real risk of these organisations' struggles being betrayed by the forces of populism. Working-class history is rich with examples of betrayal and history repeats itself "first time as tragedy, second time as farce".

In our group we do not have university degrees. The knowledge we have acquired is through experience and our study groups. We feel that maybe we are not articulate enough but we do feel the importance of writing this letter to you. We have taken off time from practical work in this critical period to discuss your publication and write to you. We have done this in a comradely spirit. We hope you accept our criticisms and discuss it amongst your supporters as such.

Yours for a democratic socialist society.

Editors' reply:

We welcome the critical letter from your group, as we do the opportunity to discuss with any serious activists within the movement.

We cannot answer every point now—on the national question and the arguments of No Sizwe, for instance, or the rejection of white workers expressed in the 'Azanian Manifesto'. But let us take up what seems to be the central issue.

To clarify ideas—yes, in a comradely spirit—we must be frank with each other. The approach indicated in your letter to the task of building the forces for the socialist revolution in South Africa is fundamentally different from that of our tendency.

The crux of the difference is to be found in your expressed aim of "building ... a non-Stalinist left".

In South African conditions this concept is a catch-all for gathering together all manner of little groups and sects,

united only by their desire for a 'socialist' society and by their common repulsion from the official—Stalinist or Stalinist-influenced—leadership of the ANC and the UDF.

As we shall try to explain, this approach will not only fail in its socialist purpose, but lead to the waste of many good revolutionaries.

The reason is that it fails to come to grips with the task of uniting the forces of the working class in the necessary conscious struggle for workers' power, democracy and socialism.

The National Forum's *Manifesto of the Azanian people*, which you support without criticism, states: "The Black working class inspired by revolutionary consciousness is the driving force of our struggle. They alone can end the system as it stands because they alone have nothing at all to lose. They have a world to gain in a democratic, anti-racist and socialist Azania."

This is both a correct and an incorrect formulation. (We will leave aside the question of the country's name and the rejection of the term 'non-racial' in favour of 'anti-racist'.)

The black working class is beyond doubt the driving force of our struggle for national liberation and socialism. It is so not only because it has "nothing to lose", but also because of its collective existence and role in modern industrial production.

This gives it alone the potential to unite its forces for revolution, draw all the black oppressed behind it and win over sections of the whites on class lines, so mustering the means to defeat the state and carry through the transformation of society—to reconstitute the nation on democratic and socialist foundations.

But the black working class rises to its feet and becomes the "driving force" not initially under the inspiration of "revolutionary consciousness" but because it is itself driven to action in defence of its conditions of life and work and against the intolerable burdens of the racist and capitalist system. In this awakening, of course, the more conscious, activist minority play a vital role.

Crucial in the process of mobilisation is the developing sense in the working class, among young and old, of its growing strength and immense potential. Nineteenths of a revolutionary class-consciousness on the part of the working class is a consciousness of its power as a class to change society.

Through the experience of mass struggle, in partial victories as well as defeats, that consciousness develops, and with it scientific ideas may take root, playing in turn a key part in the forward movement of the class. In this process the role of conscious revolutionaries in clarifying within the movement theory, perspec-

tives, strategy and tactics by means of the Marxist method becomes very important—at critical times it becomes absolutely crucial in fact.

The working class cannot be "inspired" with revolutionary consciousness other than through this process—i.e., not artificially, or by the mere subjective action of groups of "socialists" who do not gear their efforts scientifically to the real process through which the masses move and learn.

We shall try to explain this more concretely.

Clarity

In all our publications, and in our daily work within the movement, *Inqaba* supporters place great emphasis on theoretical clarity—showing how the lack of it leads to unnecessary setbacks and at times disastrously bars the road forward.

But we place no less emphasis on the working class's experience of uniting its mighty forces in action as the necessary basis for the drawing of clear revolutionary conclusions among the masses.

In practice the working class, moving into struggle on the political plane, seeks out and finds—or, lacking it, improvises—the most readily available and apparently effective vehicle or banner for uniting its forces on the greatest possible scale against the enemy.

In South Africa, for a combination of reasons, as *Inqaba* has consistently forecast and explained, the mass movement has inevitably flowed (and will all the more continue to flow) through the channels of Congress (the UDF and the ANC) on the road to the socialist revolution—on the road to clarifying its revolutionary consciousness.

Surely the group of 55, who have "regularly and conscientiously ... discussed" our publications, must have discussed this fundamental point. Yet the comrades' letter would seem to indicate that they have not really come to grips with it. A serious attitude to theory and perspectives would surely have required precisely that.

It would also have enabled these comrades to understand and cope better with the harsh experiences some of them have undergone at the hands of the Stalinists in UDF organisations, and to have avoided making sectarian mistakes as a result.

It is remarkable that anyone can have engaged in serious practical work within the mass movement in the course of 1985 without being convinced that the black working class is moving and will inevitably move under UDF and ANC banners in overwhelming numbers.

Next to this phenomenon, which has the power of a social earthquake beneath it, the forces represented by the NF and AZAPO are miniscule and historically doomed to remain so. This is explained in our perspectives document, the supplement to *Inqaba* No. 16-17, to which the comrades so strongly object.

If the group of 55 took the words of the 'Azanian Manifesto' in earnest—with its talk of the "driving" force and "historic task" of the massive black working class—they would draw the conclusion immediately to step out of the 'socialist' paddling pools of the NF and AZAPO, and go directly and permanently—with all the difficulties attendant on it—into the mainstream of the movement: Congress.

But that would mean the end of the dreams of building a so-called "non-Stalinist left" outside the UDF and ANC. It would mean the end of political dabbling. It would mean coming to grips with the formidable obstacle of Stalinism in the real arena of struggle—within Congress—where the Stalinists exercise and fight to retain their grip on the ideas and allegiance of the working-class mass as it moves to revolution.

The black working class comes into Congress, or gathers beneath its banners, partly despite the Stalinists and their pernicious anti-working class and class-collaborationist ideas—but partly because of the Stalinists and the naive identification of them with 'communism' and 'socialist revolution' in the popular mind.

Without the working class gaining actual experience of the true nature of Stalinism—and without the systematic activity of the Marxist tendency to interpret and explain these experiences and pose an alternative within the framework of Congress itself and of the unity of the mass Congress movement—without this it would be impossible to defeat the influence of the Stalinists or build the necessary revolutionary working-class leadership of the struggle.

No alternative

There is no theoretical or practical alternative to strengthening the forces of the Marxist Workers' Tendency within the Congress movement, and together with this working to build a mass ANC on a socialist program.

The idea of building a "non-Stalinist left" outside the Congress movement amounts to an abandonment of the mass of the black working class to Stalinist influence. That is why we can have no truck with this idea.

That is why we openly attack the role



ANC, FOSATU and youth banners at a funeral: the working-class movement is inevitably flowing through the channels of Congress on the road to clarifying its revolutionary consciousness.

of the NF and AZAPO leaders, who provide a 'socialist' smokescreen to divert the attention of many excellent **socialist youth and workers** away from the **real tasks** into inevitable frustration in isolation from the main battalions of the mass movement.

Inqaba and *Inqaba* supporters could hardly be considered 'soft' on Stalinism! Our criticism of Stalinism, its policies and practices has always been open and implacable. You will find no more thorough exposure of the role of the Stalinists as a conscious force obstructing the proletarian revolution, than in the material and the practical interventions of our tendency.

Yet we have also always avoided falling into the fatal error of denouncing, or turning our backs on, the rank-and-file followers of the Stalinist leaders, who presently **believe in the reliability** of these leaders as **socialists**. It is precisely from among these layers of the workers and youth that the main forces of the Marxist tendency and of the socialist revolution in South Africa will be gathered together in future—once they have understood our arguments with the benefit of their own experience.

With this approach, with clear theory and patient tactics (despite every provocation), neither expulsions nor any other methods devised by the Stalinists can succeed in separating Marxism from the Congress movement. On the contrary, the Marxist tendency will go from strength to strength.

What is our attitude towards militant class fighters and individual leaders within the Congress movement who nevertheless harbour illusions still, e.g. in the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union, or who are driven by misguided 'loyalty' even to the disgusting lengths of defending the Polish Stalinist military dictatorship against the Polish working class?

Towards them, taking all factors into

account, we adopt a careful attitude: of support when they **reflect** the genuine revolutionary socialist aspirations of the working class in the struggle; but of frank criticism when they are seen to waver or capitulate to Stalinism on national or international issues.

Politics is remorseless. Either they will break with the working class and go over wholly to the bureaucracy, or break with the bureaucracy and come with the advanced layer of the working class towards a genuine Marxist position.

The point for us is to open a gulf between the **hardened Stalinist bureaucracy** and the fighting ranks who now look to them for real revolutionary leadership (and will inevitably be disappointed). In that task we are not assisted, but on the contrary hindered, by the 'socialist' sectarians whose shrill hostility to the **Congress movement itself**, and whose frequently hooligan tactics, cement the Congress ranks behind the Stalinists and enable the latter all the more easily to unleash thuggery against **all** their opponents on the left.

Unions

On the question of the unions, the writers casually mention their participation in "CUSA and AZACTU affiliates". Nowhere is it said that these organisations have remained outside COSATU, their leaders obstructing the vital need the working class has for **trade union unity in one national federation**.

We would have been happier to hear from the comrades that they are campaigning vigorously in these unions against sectarian leadership, for a policy of immediate unconditional affiliation to COSATU, and for merger with COSATU affiliates without delay on the basis of **one industry one union**.

Sadly, the writers of the letter really show how far their minds have become clouded by a sectarian approach when they attempt to account for the popular support of the UDF (even "partly") by the funds available to it—while the NF's "major" problem is the lack thereof! In this there is not even the ABC of a political understanding of the processes taking place in the working class.

Nor is there any justification provided for the claim that "AZAPO has changed for the better". Is this since the AZAPO leadership acted as counter-revolutionary strike-breakers in denouncing the November 1984 Transvaal general strike? Or is it since November 1985 when they declared Mugabe's **capitalist Zimbabwe** (where socialist militants have recently been imprisoned without trial and tortured for putting forward their ideas) as the very model for a future 'socialist Azania'?

Strangely, the writers of the letter are entirely silent on these disturbing facts—but are "very disturbed" by our criticism of AZAPO and the NF. The "dynamic within AZAPO" appears to us to be a deterioration—into outright nationalist opportunism at the top, and into chaos and even physical fighting recently between the exponents of opposing ideas.

We urge the committed socialist workers, unemployed comrades and student youth in the group of 55, **not to go on seeking a way forward through any "dynamic within AZAPO" which cannot lead anywhere but to frustration**.

Comrades, re-examine the extensive material we have published with a fresh eye. Look for *Inqaba* supporters, who are to be found in growing numbers within the unions and UDF organisations, for systematic discussion of these problems. Arrange for further discussion, face to face, with the editors of *Inqaba* if that is feasible for you. We would more than welcome the opportunity for that. ■

'UDF militants' — a voice for workers' democracy in the movement

The revolutionary struggles of black workers and youth these past 18 months have caused a turn by the most active layers to socialist ideas.

This is reflected in the rich crop of legal, illegal, and semi-legal publications produced by hundreds of groups and organisations in the movement up and down the country.

Outstanding among them has been a paper by 'UDF militants', which is produced and distributed clandestinely inside SA.

It is clear from the content of the paper that its writers are actively involved in youth, community and trade union organisations, and are closely in touch with developments in factories and townships in several regions of the country.

Using typescript and a simple layout, with photostatic reproduction, this paper achieves a high standard technically, as well as in the clarity with which it is written. The basis of that clarity is a consistency of ideas—which fundamentally coincide with the ideas that have been put forward by *Inqaba*.

The first 'UDF militants' issue appeared in April 1985. Recognising that it represented an important development in the movement, we reprinted it in London and gave it extensive circulation abroad. Extracts were also reprinted in the British Marxist weekly, *Militant*, on 19 July.

Since then two further issues have come into our hands, published apparently in June and August respectively. While we do not see eye to eye on every point in these issues—including some quite important points—it is clear that we are in agreement with the general approach and most of the detailed policies which the comrades are pursuing.

On the next pages, we republish a small selection of articles from these first three issues of the 'UDF militants' paper. Following that, the *Inqaba* editorial board takes up some of the political issues raised in the paper, on which we think further clarification is needed if the 'UDF militants' are to develop their excellent initiative to its full potential.



Inqaba's reprint of the first 'UDF militants' paper was distributed through activists in the labour movement in many countries. One of the letters we received in response was from two trade union militants in Oakland, California:

August 3, 1985
PO Box 10614
Oakland, Ca. 94610
USA

Dear Comrades,

Today, the two of us went to shopping centres in Oakland to try to sell copies of the bulletin from UDF militants. We had never tried to do something like this before, but inside three hours we sold over twenty copies. Many people of all ages stopped to talk with us, and many people made the connection between the struggle in South Africa against racism and for workers' rights and the struggle here in the United States against the attacks of the bosses and their politicians.

We look forward to getting more copies of the bulletin and to future such documents. Many American

workers—black workers particularly—are very concerned with the situation in South Africa. We think that once the issues are properly explained, a large section of the American working class will want to actively support the fight for workers' rights in South Africa.

If there is any one message we would like to send to our comrades who are so bravely fighting in South Africa it is that documents such as the tremendous one they have just published are being used to further the struggle for international labour solidarity and socialism here in the United States.

We look forward to the day that trade unionists from South Africa and the United States can freely exchange visits to further our common struggle against our common oppressor.

In Solidarity,

*John Reimann
District Council Delegate
Carpenters Local 36*

*Richard Mellor
Chief Steward
AFSCME Local 444*

The 'UDF militants' statement of aims:

WHAT WE STAND FOR

- * A NATIONAL LIVING MINIMUM WAGE
- * END RETRENCHMENTS—FOR WORKSHARING ON FULL PAY
- * A LIVING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT
- * A MASSIVE PROGRAM TO CREATE JOBS FOR ALL
- * DECENT HOUSING, SERVICES AND EDUCATION FOR ALL
- * UNBANNING OF ALL ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS, AND RELEASE OF ALL DETAINEES AND POLITICAL PRISONERS
- * ABOLITION OF APARTHEID—INFLUX CONTROL, MIGRANT LABOUR, BANTUSTANS, RACIST PARLIAMENT
- * DISBANDING OF THE POLICE AND ARMY
- * A DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FREELY ELECTED BY ALL
- * NATIONALISE THE MINES, BANKS, FACTORIES AND BIG FARMS

FORWARD TO A GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS!

FORWARD TO A PLANNED ECONOMY BASED ON WORKERS' NEEDS!

FOR WORKERS' RULE AND SOCIALISM!

OUR WEAPONS OF STRUGGLE

- * BUILD THE UNITED FRONT OF THE UNIONS AND THE UDF
- * BUILD THE MASS ORGANISATIONS—ORGANISE THE UNORGANISED
- * FOR ONE UNITED FEDERATION OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONS
- * BUILD THE UDF UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE WORKING CLASS
- * FOR TRADE UNION AFFILIATION TO THE UDF
- * BUILD UNITED MASS ACTION
- * INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS LINKS AND SOLIDARITY ACTION

HOW WE FIGHT

We are loyal fighters for the needs of workers and youth everywhere. We always fight to build the day to day struggles of the working class. We always fight to build and unite the mass organisations—unions, UDF and youth organisations. We respect the principle of workers' democracy. This means we always carry out the majority decisions of our mass organisations. If we oppose the majority position, then we act as a loyal minority. We never split organisations because we disagree with the majority. No—we patiently build the struggle to win majority support for our policies.

USING OUR PAPER TO ORGANISE

We use our paper to organise inside the mass organisations. We build support for the program of our paper inside the mass organisations. We organise groups of workers to read and discuss the articles in our paper. We aim to get the agreement of every worker in the group for the program put forward in the paper. We try to turn every agreement into practical steps. Our groups are not just for discussion—they are organising centres for mass work. We try to get workers in the group to go out and organise support by starting their own groups.

All groups that read and support our paper must be active in the mass organisations. They use the program of the paper to help strengthen organisation and action. They fight to make the program of the paper into policy for the mass organisations. They build support amongst the rank and file and the leftwing in their mass organisation. They organise a fight in every committee and mass meeting for decisions and resolutions that will strengthen the mass organisations.

This is the only way that our program can become a living reality for the working class.

(Issued by UDF militants)



FOSATU



From the 'UDF militants' first issue (April 1985)—

BUILD THE NATIONAL YOUTH ORGANISATION!

1985 is the International Year of the Youth. UDF youth organisations are using this to campaign and organise amongst the youth. In January there was a Youth Conference held in Durban. Delegates from all our organisations decided to launch a National Youth Organisation—on the anniversary of the hanging of comrade Solomon Mahlangu. This is a great step forward!

Deacon Mathe was elected by the conference as the interim co-ordinator of the National Youth Organisation. As comrade Mathe says—"A National Youth Organisation will bring youth together into a strong united force, able to develop their political direction. Our parents spend 18 hours in factories, mines and kitchens so that the family can survive. But we youth have the time and energy to organise, to go house to house and reach out to the people. When the youth are well organised, with a clear political direction, they will contribute a lot to organising the whole working class community."

The mass struggles of our class have already given rise to a strong growth of youth organisation all over the country. The building of our National Youth Organisation will join these forces together—and give a powerful basis for united national mobilisation by working class youth. National unity is urgently needed today. We have seen too many isolated struggles, too many unnecessary divisions, too many unorganised and unplanned actions. Our National Youth Organisation can overcome these weaknesses. Hundreds

of thousands of unorganised working class youth can be recruited in a national campaign.

Youth must be strongly united with workers in the trade unions and the UDF. Workers and youth are fighting a common struggle—against Botha and the bosses, against poverty and oppression. So our National Youth Organisation must build strong links with the trade unions—organise young workers into the unions, support strikes, call for joint meetings with unions. In the UDF, the National Youth Organisation will be the youth wing of the UDF. It will be the voice of working class youth inside the mass political movement of the working class. We must fight for strong representation of youth in the regional and national bodies of the UDF.

We, the working class youth of SA, demand a future! Apartheid and capitalism offer us starvation and unemployment and repression. Through our National Youth Organisation, we will fight alongside the unions and the UDF to end apartheid rule and the bosses' profit system. We will help to build the unions. We will help to build the united front of the unions and the UDF. We will help to build the UDF as a mighty mass organisation of the working class. We will help to mobilise united mass action of the working class.

**BUILD THE NATIONAL YOUTH ORGANISATION!
WORKERS AND YOUTH TOGETHER AGAINST BOTHA
AND THE BOSSES!
FOR STRONG YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN THE UDF!
FOR A UNITED FRONT OF THE UNIONS AND THE UDF!
BUILD THE UDF AS A MASS ORGANISATION OF THE
WORKING CLASS!**

BOSSES GOVERNMENT ATTACKS WHITE WORKERS

Botha has told more than 600 000 employees in the public sector that their 13th cheque will be cut by one third. These are mainly white workers in the railways, post office and other government departments. The government is also attacking public sector workers in other ways. They have to work longer hours without extra pay. Annual increases in pay are being cut back far behind inflation. Less and less new workers are being employed.

The bosses' minister of Finance Du Plessis says workers must accept sacrifices because the economy is in a crisis. Why is there a crisis? Because the economy is controlled by bosses and organised for profits not needs. Why must workers sacrifice? Because the bosses and their government want to protect their profits at workers' expense. This is the real meaning behind the words of Du Plessis.

We black workers have long faced attacks on our living standards. But for the white workers, these attacks are a big surprise. For a long time the bosses have given privileges to white workers to defend the system against our struggle. But now the bosses are attacking white workers. We hear some people in our movement saying—"Good. The white workers must also suffer. They have been getting too much." But we say the attacks on white workers do nothing

to help our struggle. These attacks only help the bosses. When the bosses succeed in attacks on one group of workers, then they grow stronger against ALL workers. Our movement can never welcome any attacks by the bosses and their government.

Our struggle is for a decent living standard and democratic control over our lives. Our struggle is not directed against the white worker. It is directed against the bosses' system of apartheid and capitalism. We demand decent living standards for ALL workers—black and white. The only future for the white workers lies with our movement. We, the black working class, have to lead SA into a future free of all oppression and exploitation. Then we must support the white workers against the bosses' attacks. We must call on the white workers to join our struggle against the bosses and their system.

We know that this will not be easy. White workers have been fed racism by their unions and political parties for a long time. And we know that we cannot wait for the white workers to see the light and join our struggle. No—we must continue to build our organisations, our unity and our struggle. We must continue to build and strengthen the leadership of the black working class. But if we ignore the white workers, if we stand aside when the bosses attack white workers—then we are just opening the door for the CP, HNP and AWB. Then we are just handing the white workers over to the extreme rightwing and fascists.

There has never been so much confusion among white

INTERVIEW WITH A FOSATU WORKER ON AN OCCUPATION

—How did you win reinstatement of your comrades?

Simple. We occupied our factory. We took over the whole place. Management would not listen, even though we were on strike. So we said—“Fine. We are staying here. This is our factory. Get out.” We forcibly threw some of management out the factory. And the rest they ran away. They were very scared. When they were gone—it was in the afternoon—we started the machines and began producing. It was fine comrade. We were there the whole night and things were smooth. Our wives and families came to the factory with food and things. We slept there. We guarded the factory and only let our people in. We could sometimes see the spies which the bosses were sending.

How did you end the occupation?

The next day we were still producing. Even the drivers were going out and doing deliveries. The bosses were phoning all the time and saying, Please, we must talk. They also said we must stop the machines because we will do damage. We told them we will talk when they agree to reinstate our comrades. And as for the machines, we will work them every day. We know how to run the factory. We don't need anyone to manage us or supervise us. They could not believe what we were telling them. They started threatening the police. We told them they would have a big problem if there are police. We are just workers in the factory and they are

workers. And the extreme right-wing is using the situation. They are telling white workers—“The problem is that Botha and the big bosses are taking everything away from you and giving it all to the blacks.” Our movement must not stay silent while the white workers are being told this lie.

Our independent unions and our UDF have to show the white workers that their enemy is the bosses' system of profits. That their place is with the majority of the working class, fighting for the needs of all workers and oppressed. Our movement has got massive strength. We can speak with a powerful voice to the white workers. We can give them leadership through our struggle. It will be difficult to break them from racism—but we have got the power to smash racism. And if we do not start this task today, then we are helping the extreme rightwing to grow into a force that can launch bloody attacks against our movement.

Already we have seen some examples of our unions giving leadership to white workers—like at Highveld Steel in 1984. These are small examples. But we can build on them. The most important task of nonracial policy is to build working class unity against the bosses and their government. Some of our leaders are looking in another direction—towards white liberals. This is a wrong direction. The white liberals may oppose apartheid—but they also oppose our struggle against the bosses' profit system. The class of the white liberals is the capitalist class. The class of the white workers is the working class.

all outside.

Eventually in the afternoon there came this one boss with a white hanky. He was waving it and saying he wanted peace and to talk. We let him in the factory. Our leaders said—Will you reinstate? He said yes. Then we let everyone in and the thing was finished.

What have you learnt from the occupation?

Well we have seen that we can do what we have always thought—we can CONTROL. We can run the show. The bosses are still scared. They are trying to tell us we must promise never to do it again. They say it is very dangerous and they will not take it so lightly next time. We told them the only danger to us is them, and we will do it again if we have to. They know we are serious. We have found a weapon to fight retrenchment, sackings, closures. It is powerful. But we workers have to use it together as a class, if we are going to win. Today we say—ORGANISE OR STARVE. Tomorrow it will be—OCCUPY AND CONTROL.

INTERVIEW WITH A WHITE WORKER IN THE POST OFFICE

—What work do you do?

I deliver letters. It is hard work. I must walk for hours with a heavy bag.

—What are your hours of work?

I start at 3 o'clock in the morning. I have to catch a train and a bus to get to work at 6 a.m. I finish work any time after 12 o'clock. Often I work till late afternoon.

—Do you get overtime pay?

No ways! They have stopped all overtime pay now. Every day we work longer—but we get nothing extra for this. What is making things even more difficult is that we are doing extra work as well. In our department there are 10 vacancies, but they haven't employed any new people. We must do the extra work, but we aren't getting paid for it.

—Have you complained to your bosses?

Sure we have—but they just don't want to hear about it. They just tell us—if you don't like the work, then put on your jacket and go. The bastards. I can't afford to leave. I've got a standard 6—where will I go? I've got rent to pay. I must support the family. Everything is getting more expensive—look at the increase in GST.

—Have you got a union?

We've got a staff association, but what good are they? They do nothing about our cut in wages. What can we do?

From the second issue (June 1985) BOSSES SPEAK AGAINST APARTHEID

Mr Harry Oppenheimer is one of the richest bosses in the world. Thousands and thousands of workers are making profits for him—on mines, in factories, on farms. He is the boss of workers here in SA, and also of many more workers in other countries like Brazil. This rich boss has been visiting overseas. And overseas he is saying—“The SA government must get rid of apartheid and the pass laws. The blacks must be given a vote.” Today we are hearing all the richest bosses speak like Oppenheimer. When they say these things, the bosses are trying to sound like our friends.

But who can believe that these are our allies? Who can believe what they are saying? How many of us have been sacked by these so-called friends of the people? Which one of us has ever been paid a living wage by them? Look what happened with Oppenheimer. While he was overseas talking about an end to apartheid, workers went on strike against apartheid job reservation at his Vaal Reefs mine. Did he support the efforts of workers to get rid of apartheid? No—we saw what Oppenheimer really thinks about ending apartheid. He and his management sent their special mine police with guns and dogs and gas to attack workers. It was they who sacked more than 14 000 workers. It was they who forced the strikers into buses and sent them back to the rural areas to starve. Did we hear them say there should be no pass laws then? No—they were happy to USE the pass laws. Because the pass laws are there to help bosses like Oppenheimer.

It is these things which we experience as workers. It is these things which show the real truth behind the bosses' words. The truth is that the bosses do not know how to stop our movement. That is why they have started talking against apartheid. That is why they are trying to look like friends of the people.

The bosses want the police and the pass laws to control us. They just do not want us to resist. But every day of our struggle, they can see the price of police attacks and pass laws is getting bigger and bigger. The bosses want apartheid. They just do not want to pay the price for it. Without our mass struggle and our mass organisation—we would hear nothing from the bosses about ending apartheid. It is our resistance that is dividing the bosses from their government. It is our struggle that confuses the bosses and undermines their confidence. It is our struggle that is making the whole apartheid system shake.

The bosses are losing control. That is why they talk about getting rid of apartheid. But they are planning and working much harder to get rid of something else—the strength of our movement.

The bosses are saying there must be change. But they will not accept any real change that threatens their profit system. They will allow nothing that does not obey the law of profit. They will attack everything that challenges the law of profit. But there is change today and there will be more change tomorrow. The biggest change in South Africa has got nothing to do with the talk of the bosses. It is not a change that is happening because the bosses will allow it. It is a change that is happening because the bosses cannot stop it. It is not a change that comes from the bosses. It is a change that comes from us.

South Africa is a different country today—because it is a country where the workers' movement is strong. We are

From the third issue (August 1985) STRENGTHEN THE UDF

The state of emergency has exposed the fundamental weakness in the UDF—organisation is not strongly enough rooted in the masses and under worker and youth control. When they arrest the top leadership, the organisation is often left without direction. Anger and militancy in our class is left to explode without strong unity, discipline and a clear way forward. Already we saw this happen before the emergency when the national leadership was hit by Treason Trial arrests. National co-ordination and campaigns were effectively stopped. Today in the emergency areas we feel the same problem. This problem was already recognised in resolutions at the National Council in April. Our leadership has failed to carry out the decisions of the Council.

We have not been defeated by this problem—because the UDF has the support of millions of workers and youth like us. New forces rise up to replace local leaders who are arrested. The mass support and the local activists are the foundation on which the UDF lives. They are the foundation for the consumer boycotts that are growing in every area and turning into a national campaign.

But we cannot go forward with only a foundation. We cannot just rely on mass support, without building it more and more into mass organisation. Our class needs a national political organisation rooted in the masses and under working class leadership. More and more we see and know that this organisation is the ANC. By strengthening the UDF we are at the same time building towards a mass ANC.

How to strengthen the UDF? We must strengthen the main affiliates as real working class organisations—not just small committees of leaders. We need to link them together in strong local branches. We must bring the regional and national councils under the control of local branches and working class affiliates, according to the rules of workers' democracy. We need to forge links at every level with the non-affiliated unions, in order to build co-operation and unity in struggle. We need to open the local branches to workers in these unions who support the UDF.

Community and youth organisations need to be rooted

more and more organised, more and more united, more and more determined. The bosses know that today, if they try to sack us, there will be a price to pay. Today, the bosses know that if their police kill our brothers and sisters—there will be a price to pay. Today the bosses know that they cannot just pay us what they decide. They know that we are getting stronger and stronger every day in resisting their control. They know that strikes and mass action are growing. They know that we are talking and planning more and more in our movement about the future—a future when the bosses are defeated. They know that our demands are growing. These are the real changes that are happening in SA. And each one is happening even though the bosses want to stop them.

For the bosses, there is the law of profits. They can talk about reforms, but nothing can be more important to them than the law of profits. For us, there is also one law. It is the law of our movement—We rely on our own strength, we use the weapons that are in our own hands, we turn always to our own class for support. It is because of this law of the workers' movement that there is change in South Africa today. And it is by following this law that we will be winning greater and greater changes tomorrow.

in street committees, area committees, and zone committees. In some townships we have already started to achieve this. COSAS must be firmly based in the mass of students at each school. Affiliates need to launch powerful campaigns to organise the unorganised, in co-operation with the trade unions. Millions of our class must still be drawn into the UDF and the unions! We must get together to set up local UDF branches that are open to all supporters. If it is not possible to hold general meetings of the branch, then at least we must have delegates from affiliates meeting regularly. Much of our organising work will have to be underground. But this will not stop us. It has not stopped us in PE, East London and other places. If we cannot meet openly, then we must organise street meetings, we must go house to house, we must use the buses and trains and factories for meetings.

The policy and leadership of the UDF must be under the control of the mass membership—and this means worker/youth control. In the regional councils we must make sure that local branches and affiliate organisations are represented by elected delegates, according to their size. On the national council, the regions and affiliates must again have a voice according to their weight in the UDF. This is the basic rule of workers' democracy. This is how we will make sure that our needs are taken up by our UDF. And this is how we will greatly strengthen our campaigns and mass action behind the UDF banner.

We are fighting for this inside the UDF. The unions and youth organisations can and must take the lead in this fight. We must put an end to the situation where mass organisations have no more say than tiny committees of 'leaders' without real links to the masses. We must put an end to the situation where some UDF 'leaders' feel free to speak and act without a mandate.

Repression and terror under the emergency make our fight for mass organisation and workers' democracy more difficult. But the mass resistance to the emergency helps this fight. Millions of workers and youth are mobilising—and they are looking for a way to organise, unite and march forward. We must use these conditions to strengthen the UDF. We must build the national consumer boycott—and we must

use it to organise and consolidate mass support for the UDF. The consumer boycott committees must be rooted in the streets, the factories, the schools. They must be opened up to delegates from street committees, union branches, SRCs, as well as delegates from UDF affiliates. In this way we will greatly strengthen the boycott. And we will prepare the basis for more and greater struggle. The ANC has called for the building of Peoples Committees in the townships. Today this means building the boycott committees, opening them up, and rooting them in the masses.

We need a special national delegate conference—to discuss the boycott and the struggle against the emergency, to discuss how to defend and strengthen the UDF. Yes, the state will try to stop this, or to victimise delegates. We have to find a way round this problem. Because the needs of our struggle demand a meeting of delegates—even if we have to organise secret regional and national meetings.

These are the tasks which we face. This is how we will strengthen the UDF. This how we will prepare the road for a mass ANC that unites our class and fights for our needs. The emergency makes these tasks more difficult. But the emergency also makes them much more urgent. Let us join together as workers and youth committed to mass organisation and leadership of our class. Let us go out to our brothers and sisters wherever they live, wherever they struggle. Then we will find the strength to make all of these things real. We will find strength far greater than Botha and the bosses can break with their emergency. We will find the greatest strength known to the world—the strength of the working class, organised and united to put an end to all oppression and exploitation.

STRENGTHEN UDF AFFILIATES AS MASS ORGANISATIONS!

BUILD LOCAL UDF BRANCHES!

FOR WORKER/YOUTH CONTROL OF UDF COUNCILS!

ROOT THE BOYCOTT COMMITTEES IN THE MASSES!

FOR A SPECIAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE OF THE UDF!

FORWARD TO A MASS ANC UNDER WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP

THE EMERGENCY— A WORKER'S STORY

"I am from the East Rand. Times were bad before the emergency. But they are a lot worse now. Many many people have been arrested—many youth. Hundreds of youth have skipped to join the ANC or they are on the run. The army and police are terrorising the whole community. They concentrated on one area—we call it Angola because it is the hottest area here. They did house to house searches. They were coming in with sjamboks and guns and beating everyone and everything. If residents resist and don't let them in—they just fire teargas. They were searching our houses, throwing everything around and breaking our furniture and things.

I heard yesterday that they were raiding shebeens and beating people. People say that some women were raped. But what can we do? If we protest, they just kill us. Another trick of theirs is this. They come to a house looking for someone. If that person is not there, then they take the baby child of that person. They tell the people in the house that the child will be returned when they get the person they want. Now it is tough to stay running when the police have got

your baby.

Our townships are completely occupied. The hippos and horses and those big trucks are many here. The soldiers are walking around the streets with their guns. Sometimes the youth attack them. Say about 500 youth will just come running from the houses and attack these convoys with petrol bombs and bricks and things. It is a proper war here. Almost every day there are these big roadblocks. Everyone moving in or out is stopped and searched. These army they are very rude and rough with a person. They call us kaffirs and terrorists and things like that.

If you have anything with you—even your union card—then they will keep you until the security have checked you out. I was kept 5 hours at a road block because of my union paper. Another problem is that there are no buses because of the rioting. The buses drop us outside the township. We are walking for an hour or two each day just to get home or catch the bus.

Workers here are sick of the beating and killing and arrests. We want the police and army to get out of our townships for all time. We can run things properly here. We are fighting for this to happen."

'UDF Militants' — Inqaba editors' comment

In commenting on the first three issues of the 'UDF militants' paper, we are conscious that whatever we can safely write here is no adequate substitute for lengthy discussion with editors and writers of the paper. We hope the opportunity to do that systematically is not too long delayed.

We would like to congratulate the comrades on their achievement. The paper is well grounded within the mass movement and is splendidly free of the sectarian tone which characterises so much of the critical left-wing and pro-socialist press in SA. It is written with confidence in the basis of mass support which exists for policies of workers' power and socialism in the struggle to overthrow the apartheid regime.

That basis of mass support, as the comrades know well from experience, exists above all within the working-class ranks of the UDF youth and community organisations, and among the members of the democratic non-racial trade unions. The firm commitment of the paper to building the UDF, to building a mass ANC, and to building a united federation of industrial unions (now launched as COSATU) stands out on virtually every page. This provides a large part of the political strength of the paper, and would ensure its viability even under the severest persecution.

But that is why, in our view, dangers are opened up by the addition of the AZAPO symbol (alongside symbols of the main Congress and trade union organisations) on the front page of issues 2 and 3, and also by the way in which the comrades take up the question of the **united front**.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Inqaba*, in our reply to the letter of a 'group of 55', we have reiterated our position on AZAPO, explaining why socialists should not in any way treat it as an equivalent of the UDF (or Congress movement) when taking up the vital task of building mass unity in the struggle.

It becomes clear on studying the paper that the 'UDF militants' do not in fact look on AZAPO as any kind of 'equivalent' of the UDF. "AZAPO is tiny, without mass support", they write on page 12 of the

second issue. But that is the very reason why it would be incorrect for the **mass Congress movement**, or the left-wing within it, to put forward a **united front** with AZAPO.

A 'united front' must be a **united front of mass organisations**—or it is no addition to the fighting strength of the movement and becomes, on the contrary, a swamp of unending disunity. Before going further into this subject, however, we should deal with a separate but seemingly related point.

Defend democracy

We fully agree with the 'UDF militants' in deploring the violent outbreaks that have occurred between UDF and AZAPO supporters—some involving killings—which can only play into the hands of the state. We would defend the democratic right of AZAPO supporters, and of the supporters of all other tendencies and organisations struggling to bring down the apartheid regime, to put forward their views within the movement.

They should be given a hearing, their mistaken views should be answered in debate with facts and serious arguments. They should be defeated politically, not by intimidation or force—for this is the way to raise the political level of, and **really unify**, the whole movement.

In turn, they must abandon hooligan tactics against their opponents, and observe the **paramount rule of unity in action**. This means refusing to act as obstacles or strike-breakers when mass action is undertaken, simply because they happen to 'disagree'.

The 'UDF militants' write:

"We have seen militants attacking people with petrol bombs because of political disagreements... We have seen workers attacked by militants because they did not hear about a stayaway, or because nobody tried to convince them and their union about the need for a stayaway."

It is a thousand times right to deplore this. At the same time, those who **deliberately** put themselves in

active opposition to the mass movement when it is actually engaging in a fight against the bosses or the state—those who break strikes, etc, and thereby threaten the vital interests of the whole working class—have only themselves to blame if they get a drubbing.

We agree wholeheartedly with the approach taken by the 'UDF militants' in their article: "The method of workers' democracy" (issue 2). We also agree with the point made in this passage in the same issue:

"...we say to our UDF comrades—'Yes, the UDF is the majority organisation, with mass support from workers and youth. It is true that AZAPO is tiny, without mass support. It is true that AZAPO leaders are wrong to try to stand outside the mass organisations, instead of fighting to strengthen them. All of these things are true. But still, there are brothers and sisters of ours who support AZAPO, who are fighting the bosses and their government, who are oppressed and exploited just like us. We need to stand together with them in struggle. That is the way to convince them that we are right—not by attacking them...'"

However, we believe the 'UDF militants' are muddling things up when they use this as an argument in favour of a UNITED FRONT between the UDF and AZAPO.

In fact it is an argument only for approaching the good revolutionary elements, especially of the youth, within AZAPO (and related organisations) for fraternal but frank discussion and to persuade them to break with sectarianism and throw their energies in with the UDF in the course of mass campaigns.

Dual purpose

When used by revolutionary socialists, the UNITED FRONT tactic always has a dual purpose, which it is essential to bear in mind.

On the one hand its purpose is to bring to bear against the class enemy **the maximum real fighting forces of the working class in action.**

Many of the trade unions, including the most powerful, have not entered the UDF. It is essential to call

(as the 'UDF militants' do) for a united front of these unions with the UDF on an agreed, specific program of action. The primary purpose of this is to draw together in struggle against the bosses and the regime the **hundreds of thousands** of union members and the **millions** of other mainly working-class people—especially the youth—who look to the UDF for leadership.

As Trotsky put it: "...the greater is the mass drawn into the movement, the higher the self-confidence rises, all the more self-confident will that mass movement be and all the more resolutely will it be capable of marching forward, however modest may be the initial slogans of struggle." (*The First Five Years of the Communist International*, vol. 2)

Mass organisations

Because the purpose of the united front is to draw together and embolden the **mass of the working class**, raising confidence in its latent power, only a united front of different **mass organisations** makes any sense. If a 'united front' is proposed of all and sundry, of big organisations with little sects (however committed the fighters in their ranks), it is usually because this essential point of the united front has been lost sight of.

But there is another weightier point to bear in mind. Revolutionary socialists have a second purpose in employing the united front tactic. This is to **separate** the rank-and-file supporters of a **rival** mass organisation from their leaders and to win them instead to our organisation and our leadership.

How these inter-related but **different** purposes behind the united front tactic are pursued in practice will depend on the concrete circumstances in each case.

In the trade union field, the policy of Marxists is to fight for the unification of the workers in **one union per industry**, and the unification of the unions in **one federation** (obviously COSATU). In the unions, and in the federation, we fight for the influence and predominance of Marxist ideas, policies and methods. This means combatting in a systematic way the ideas, policies, methods and influence

of reformist and opportunist leaders and trends.

In the political field our approach is determined by the absence of a **mass revolutionary party of the working class**—something which cannot, as we have explained elsewhere, now be summoned directly into existence by groups of revolutionary cadres or by an advanced minority of workers within the unions.

Our present task is to seek to unite the mass of the working class under **one political banner**, namely Congress—so as to prevent the carving up of the movement between **rival** opportunist leaders, and to frustrate the enemy's attempts at divide-and-rule.

In taking this approach to what is (let us acknowledge), in the character of its leadership and political tradition, a **petty-bourgeois nationalist** organisation, we base ourselves on the overwhelming numerical and social weight of the **black working-class** in South Africa. For a combination of historical reasons, the black working class has traditionally rallied to Congress, and will inevitably return again and again to the Congress banner as it seeks the road to power in the revolutionary epoch now opening up.

It is **inside** one **mass** Congress movement that revolutionaries can work most effectively to **establish the political predominance of the working class** and the influence of Marxism upon the **whole** mass movement. It is here that the struggle to defeat reformist and opportunist—including especially **Stalinist**—trends is assured the best conditions for eventual victory.

This is the route—through the building and **transformation** of the Congress movement—to the creation of the mass revolutionary working-class party under Marxist leadership.

By advocating the purposeful entry of unions into the UDF—and, failing that, **united front action** of the unions and the UDF together in well-planned and sustained campaigns—we seek to advance both the **politicisation of the trade unions** and the **proletarianisation of the UDF/Congress organisations and leadership**.

The language of 'unity' and of the 'united front' is not, of course, a special property of Marxists. Whether in the trade union or directly political field, reformists and oppor-

tunists often find themselves quite at home with this terminology. But invariably what they have in mind is some form of **institutional** 'united front', or permanent peace pact between leaders, which avoids the necessity of a **real struggle** to win over the ranks of their political rivals.

Revolutionaries, on the other hand, have no interest in a 'united front' of words and pretty resolutions which **lull** the masses to sleep, believing that "if everyone is united, everything must be fine". We must wage war against the concept of **such** a 'united front', behind which opportunist and reformists take shelter, and which serves as a screen for **inaction** in fact.

The approach of Marxism to the united front is to propose it exclusively as a practical combination of different, including rival, mass organisations for the purpose of striking simultaneously a planned blow in action against the enemy.

A united front is for action or it is for nothing. Only **in action** and **through action** is the working class able to test decisively the relative merits, clarity, policy, boldness and firmness of rival leaderships. Only through **action** do the political differences stand out sharply enough to be fully clarified for the masses.

Nobody could doubt that the 'UDF militants' are proposing unity for purposes of **action**. Nevertheless, we are concerned that in their material on the question of a united front, all the emphasis is placed on the advantages of 'unity' (which, of course, we do not for a moment dispute), and no emphasis is placed on the need to **use** the united front tactic to **break** the hold of reformist and opportunist leaders over their followers.

AZAPO

The lack of clarity on the united front is brought to light especially in relation to AZAPO, which is why we are concentrating on that subject here. It is revealed particularly in the call for a "UNITED FRONT OF ALL ORGANISATIONS" as "the only way to mobilise enough strength against Botha and the bosses" (issues 1, 2 and 3), and the call "FOR CO-OPERATION AND UNITED

ACTION OF UDF AND AZAPO" (issue 3).

To propose a 'united front' with AZAPO dignifies it as an organisation possessing a mass following which it actually lacks.

Instead of hammering home the glaring fact of this weakness to the socialist youth within AZAPO, the proposal of a united front with AZAPO serves to **obscure** this fact from them. Instead of winning them over **through the attractive power of a growing, genuinely democratic and socialist left-wing within the Congress movement**, proposing a 'united front' with AZAPO will tend to sustain its existence as a sectarian rival.

This therefore would complicate and **delay** the necessary task (which the 'UDF militants' are in a very good position to carry forward) of **eliminating AZAPO by political means**. We should not hesitate to recognise the necessity of its elimination.

Why? Because it is of paramount importance that the question of "for or against socialism", "for or against workers' democracy and workers' power"—the clash between petty-bourgeois and working-class leadership—should be concentrated and fought out within a mass working-class movement **united under one political banner, within one political framework—Congress**—so as to prevent dangerous splits of the movement later.

Although we think it is now virtually ruled out that AZAPO would ever be able to grow into a mass organisation to rival Congress, it is still important to use a **political** battle against AZAPO to educate the movement, and above all to release from its sectarian influences a good few hundred valuable revolutionary youth—who could become some of the best fighters for socialism in Congress.

However, nowhere in the 'UDF militants' paper do we find any clear political criticism of AZAPO. Its leaders are merely reproached for standing "outside the mass organisations" instead of "strengthening" (!) them. The comrades are too polite even to attack the **strike-breaking role** of the AZAPO leaders in November 1984—something flowing not accidentally from AZAPO's petty-bourgeois nationalist and opportunist politics and incurably sectarian method.

Yet how can the socialist youth in

AZAPO be won for the working-class movement if they are not forced by relentless political criticism from revolutionary socialists in the UDF to **break decisively** with AZAPO and its leadership?

To simply propose a 'united front' with AZAPO as the solution to division in the movement shows that the 'UDF militants' are not taking the problem up in a fundamental, political way—but rather hoping for an **organisational formula** to solve it. That will not work.

Trade unions

The problem of the 'united front' is posed also in the trade union field. Here the dual purpose in the united front tactic, set out above, also applies—and leads, in the concrete circumstances, to a different conclusion than in the case of AZAPO.

CUSA and AZACTU remain outside the ranks of COSATU. The 'UDF militants' have correctly called for the leaders of CUSA and AZACTU unions to join the new federation and not use their political differences as a pretext for staying out. The need for a united trade union movement **within which political differences can be democratically discussed and fought out** is the decisive consideration for anyone who is serious about defeating the bosses and the state.

However, CUSA at least retains a mass membership in some of its unions. It is quite possible that, because of the overwhelming weight of COSATU, much of the CUSA membership will tend to drift over to COSATU unions in the next period. However, it would be wrong to be complacent about that.

Workers usually have a tenacious loyalty to the organisation through which they first awakened to struggle, and are not immediately fully conscious of the political issues—or the bureaucratic interests and manoeuvres of the leaders—which may keep their particular organisation separated from the mass of the class. This is especially the case with a trade union where the whole workforce in a particular plant or section of an industry is organised in one body.

It may well prove a very difficult

task to win over the ranks of CUSA unions to COSATU and end the separate existence of that body.

Thus the application of the united front tactic by COSATU becomes very important. But the first condition for its success is a clear **program of action** on the part of COSATU. A 'unity' merely of declarations and phrases, as already pointed out, would be the **opposite** of a real united front. It would be a screen for passivity of leadership—and **keep** the rival organisations separated **in fact**.

A **campaign of action**, on the other hand, on a clear demand or demands (however modest) which are popular among workers generally—combined with a call for a united front—would lay the basis for winning the ranks of CUSA into COSATU (as well as recruiting many thousands of new members to COSATU's affiliated unions).

This would succeed to the extent that the leaders and activists in COSATU unions show themselves in action to be a more effective fighting force than their rivals, and so draw to them the CUSA (etc) ranks.

If, on the other hand, the offer of a united front—properly put forward in fraternal terms both at leadership level and through direct approaches by the rank-and-file—were **rejected** by the CUSA union leaders, that would be all the more reason for their members to go over to COSATU unions in the course of an action campaign.

We are convinced that the 'UDF militants' will make their paper, as well as their day-to-day political work in the movement, much more effective if they **clarify their approach to the question of unity and the united front along these lines**.

Politics

Together with this, we believe, there should be the development of a more **politically critical** approach in the paper.

No doubt correctly, to begin with, the comrades' priority has been to establish the **immediate practical relevance** of their slogans and tactics in the midst of the battles against the bosses and the regime which have consumed every waking moment of the activists over the past year.

Hence, no doubt, the concentration on organisational and tactical questions, on 'unity' and 'action'.

On its own, however, this will prove inadequate to sustain the development of the paper, and the groups around it—in the longer term, or even possibly during the period of relative ebb which we are temporarily passing through.

It is necessary, even in an agitational paper for mass distribution, to give space to **explaining** basic ideas (i.e. to theory, popularly presented); to examining **perspectives**; and to analysing the **political differences** between various organisations, leaders and tendencies. This is an area in which we feel the 'UDF militants' paper has so far been lacking.

'Unity' as a political position is not a sufficient prescription for all ills. An example of the inadequacy of this is in the second issue of the paper, in the article on the lessons of the strike over the death of Andries Raditsela.

Correctly it is explained that the union leadership were to blame for the relatively low response to the strike call. However, this is ascribed purely to the lack of a united committee to organise the strike.

A more powerful point to have made was that, in contrast to the November 1984 strike in the Transvaal and the one in the Eastern Cape in March 1985, there was no attempt by the strike organisers to harness the drive of the youth to mobilise workers. (This despite the fact that COSAS activist Siphos Mutisi had also been murdered by the regime.)

Nevertheless, the main point to bring out in a Marxist paper is the **political reason** why the FOSATU leaders failed to mobilise the workers adequately for the Raditsela strike—**which is inseparably connected with their refusal to lead nationwide general strike action during the whole period.**

To get to the bottom of this, it is necessary for the paper to critically examine the ideas, the assumptions, the origins, the strength of **reformist** and **economist** influences and tendencies within the unions.

If you merely give **organisational** and **tactical** arguments in your criticism of a union or political leadership, you may get the agreement of many workers and youth. But you will not help them to **understand** for themselves **why** the same organisational and tactical failings

are repeated again and again by the leadership of the movement **unless you bring out the underlying political reasons.**

Only by doing so is it possible to build and cement together a clearly defined revolutionary **political tendency** within the movement.

Leadership

Reducing issues to the simple question of 'working-class leadership' versus 'middle-class leadership' is likewise insufficient. Of course we are in favour of working-class leadership and worker/youth control.

But especially when it comes to the unions, it is impossible to clarify the problem of leadership adequately by this method. The extent of reformist influences within the unions is undoubtedly attributable in large part to middle-class intellectuals. But there is nothing **automatic** in the rise of the working-class movement to a fully-formed and scientific revolutionary class-consciousness.

Trade unions, in fact, provide a certain 'natural' basis for economism and reformism, which can begin to take root among the membership even in South African conditions if these trends are not systematically combatted by conscious revolutionaries.

For this it is necessary to conduct a struggle on all levels **including the level of ideas, theory, ideology.** That in turn can only be effectively done in a paper which **delineates itself clearly as a political tendency**, which explains the consistency of its own scientific socialist **system of ideas**, and which identifies the **historical roots and development** of these ideas in contrast with all other tendencies.

Missing from the first three issues of the 'UDF militants' paper is any clear identification of reformism and economism on the one hand, or Stalinism on the other. Hence the paper lacks any political polemic against these dangerous misleading trends. They are instead criticised **indirectly**, through purely organisational and tactical arguments. We believe that will not suffice to defeat them.

When the comrades take up the ANC, they correctly call for the building of "a mass ANC"—and then add: "We will build it so that it really fights for the needs of

workers."

Very good—but in what way is the ANC failing to fight for the needs of workers? That must be explained politically, or the point is lost. Moreover, why not put the slogan of *Inqaba*: "Build a mass ANC on a **socialist program**"? Is there any other basis on which the ANC can "really fight for the needs of workers"?

Especially when the ANC leadership is busy publicly dissociating itself from socialism—while at the same time, of course, insisting that tactics of compromise with capitalism are the best way of "really fighting for the needs of workers"—it is necessary for any conscious working-class tendency in Congress to emphasise precisely the need for a mass **socialist** ANC.

Clearer political analysis and criticism; greater attention to perspectives—these would add enormously in future to the already considerable strengths of the 'UDF militants' paper.

Particularly if this phase of **relative ebb** lasts for some time (as is **possible**), the emphasis would have to be placed on political argument and discussion of lessons of the last period—or comrades could shout themselves hoarse with calls for 'unity' and 'action' in an effort to propel the movement immediately to a higher level.

Due attention to perspectives—constant sober analysis of the phase through which the movement is passing—is not an optional 'extra' for revolutionaries, or some kind of intellectual luxury which real activists can't afford the time for. Theory, as Lenin put it, is a guide to action. More discussion of perspectives in the paper would in fact help the comrades to judge precisely, and then explain, what actions and tactics to put forward appropriate to the present phase, and so gain the most effective echo among the masses.

There are some other specific points we could take up, but they are quite secondary to the main issues dealt with above.

We hope the 'UDF militants' will consider our comments in the spirit of a fraternal discussion among co-thinkers and comrades, which we hope can be carried on verbally and in writing in the future.

The comrades' paper is an historic step forward in the movement. May it go from strength to strength! ■

THE FREEDOM CHARTER AND NATIONALISATION



ANC President Tambo and Anglo-American Corporation boss Gavin Relly, who met recently in Lusaka.

**By Maoto Kgomo
and Richard Monroe**

The recent visits to Lusaka by bosses of the monopolies and by their agents, a group of PFP politicians, have once more thrown some light on the nature and the tasks of the South African revolution. Not accidentally, the central theme of all the talks held there has been what kind of economic system is advocated by the ANC.

"South African businessmen want to know" wrote the British *Financial Times* (14/9/85), "how far ANC thinking is still wedded to the Utopian vision outlined vaguely in the Freedom Charter drawn up in 1955."

The rising political temperature inside the country has been accompanied by the endorsement of the Freedom Charter by wider sections within the movement.

Far from being "a utopian vision", the demands in the Freedom Charter set out the basic needs of the oppressed working people.

In the 1950s, as a recent article in *Sechaba* (July 1985) has reminded us, the drawing up of the Charter was preceded by a "zealous campaign of printed propaganda ... side by side with hundreds of meetings and

house-to-house canvasses, as well as group discussions. The main purpose of this activity was to get the people to speak for themselves, and to state what changes must be made in South Africa if they are to enjoy freedom.

"Every demand made by the people at these gatherings, however small the matter, was recorded and collected for consideration by the Congress of the People for inclusion in the Freedom Charter. In this way, the Freedom Charter became, not only in principle but also in actuality, the charter of the people, the content of which has its source in their homes, in the factories, mines, and rural reserves."

Living Reality

Even more today, working people in the factories, the townships and the Bantustans are struggling "to turn the Freedom Charter into a living reality, not just a set of ideals on paper"—the words of an Eastern Cape UDF leader—because it contains within it their aspirations for a decent life in a transformed society.

It is because of this overwhelming popularity of the Charter that the bourgeoisie start biting their tongues. But why do they fear the Charter so much?

"There shall be Work and Security!", proclaims the Charter; "There

shall be Houses, Security, and Comfort!". But how can the SA capitalist class provide a living wage, or jobs and homes for all?

The capitalists are not in business to give the workers bread, clothing, build their houses or educate their children—but solely to make profits. That they sometimes give some of these amenities to the workers is because they need the workers' labour, and are therefore obliged to maintain it.

Backward SA capitalism depends on cheap labour, and cannot escape this dependence in conditions of worsening capitalist crisis worldwide.

If the capitalist class could afford to give in to the demands of the Charter while maintaining their wealth and power, wouldn't they long ago have tried to appease the oppressed masses, even if by some token gestures, rather than wait for the fateful hour of the revolution?

Today, under the huge pressures from below, the ruling class is compelled to tinker with "reforms". But the wave of entry of the mass of workers into their democratic organisations to struggle for the demands of the Charter is an unnering state of affairs for the capitalist class. It poses a deadly threat to their hopes of carrying through their politics of compromise successfully.

If the capitalists are agonised by the implications of the Freedom Charter, while the workers and youth

look on them as sources of inspiration, this is by no means accidental. It is because the bourgeoisie and the working masses are two distinct and irreconcilably antagonistic classes through and through.

What is it in the Freedom Charter that the capitalists fear most? Let them speak for themselves. "The two major demands of the Freedom Charter are that 'the people shall share in the country's wealth' and that 'the land shall be shared among those who work it' writes the *Financial Times* (14/9/1985). "The fact that the businessmen sought yester-

day's talks reflects the deep concern felt by South African business at the increasing radicalisation of black thinking and the growing rejection of the free enterprise system ... What businessmen wanted to know was the degree to which this view was shared by the ANC leadership." (Our emphasis—*Editor*)

No less than any other part of the Charter, its call for the nationalisation of the "mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks, and monopoly industry" stems from the experience of the working masses.

Proposing this clause at the Con-

gress of the People in 1955, a trade unionist pointed out how "the factories, the lands, the industries and everything possible is owned by a small group of people who are the capitalists in this country. They skin the people, they live on the fat of the workers and make them work, as a matter of fact in exploitation. They oppress in order to keep them as slaves in the land of their birth.

"Now we would like to see", he continued, "a South Africa where the industries, the lands, the big businesses and the mines, and everything that is owned by a small group of people in this country, must be owned by all the people in this country. That is what we demand, that is what we fight for and until we have achieved that we must not rest."

The same call—for the nationalisation of big business—was made at the launching rally of the 500 000 strong COSATU by its President, Elijah Barayi, Vice-President of the National Union of Mineworkers.

What does this call mean today? In 1983 seven big monopolies controlled 80% of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. In production, 2,7% of enterprises controlled half of total turnover; 6,3% employed nearly two-thirds of the workforce; 6% owned 85% of all fixed assets.

Today the ownership of wealth is even more concentrated. Between them, just Anglo-American, Old Mutual/Barlow-Rand, and Sanlam control more than three-quarters of the shares on the Stock Exchange. This means that they own far more than the 4 500 companies they owned in 1983—and have assets far greater than the 1983 estimated total of R80 000 million.

What gets produced in South Africa, how much of it, and for how much, depends not on the needs of the people, but fundamentally on the profit-grabbing decisions of the small group of capitalists who control these monopolies.

To implement the Freedom Charter, *Inqaba* explained at that time (No. 11, August-October 1983), "The ANC should declare its intention to nationalise at least the big seven monopolies immediately on coming to power."

It should also be made clear that there can be no question of buying these monopolies from their capitalist owners. The capitalists have stolen this wealth from the working class



Central Johannesburg—nerve-centre of the economic power of monopoly capitalism in South Africa.

which produced it. Compensation for nationalisation should be limited to individual shareholders, such as pensioners, who are dependent on income from a few shares. For the capitalists, there must be **no compensation**. The wealth of South Africa must be restored to the people.

What has been the response of the ANC leadership to the concern expressed by business spokesmen in Lusaka at the "utopian vision" of the Freedom Charter?

Unspeakable poverty

In a press conference following the talks, Comrade President Tambo said that "we cannot leave the large corporations operating as they do... They represent tremendous wealth in the midst of unspeakable poverty." He named, specifically, Anglo American, Barlow Rand, and Sanlam.

But did Comrade Tambo state clearly the intention of the ANC to **nationalise** these major monopolies?

Certainly, this is not what the visiting businessmen understood. Said Tony Bloom, Chairman of Premier Group, "I got the impression that they were interested in the state owning part of the more important industries rather than in total nationalisation." Zac De Beer, another monopoly pioneer, recalled that President Tambo had said that "large sectors of the economy would be left open to private enterprise." (*Guardian Weekly*, 5/10/85)

Unfortunately, in subsequent statements, Comrade Tambo has reinforced this interpretation of the policy of the ANC leadership.

Interviewed by Anthony Heard, the *Cape Times* editor, Comrade Tambo stated "all we do is to interpret what the charter says. We have not attempted to depart from that in any way."

He continued, however, that "broadly the interpretation is that the state would control some of the industries, solely with a view to ensuring an equitable distribution of the wealth that we have... **It would be a mixed economy.**"

"Everyone's property will be secure", he added. (4/11/1985, Our emphasis—*Editor*) This is a very strange "interpretation" of the Freedom Charter indeed!

A few days earlier, Comrade Tambo had addressed the British parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. Asked by a Tory M.P., "Is it your intention to destroy the capitalist system as such, or to reform it?", he replied:

"No, we do not want to destroy it. The Freedom Charter does not even purport to want to destroy the capitalist system. All that the Freedom Charter does is to envisage a mixed economy in which part of the economy, some of the industries, would be controlled, owned, by the State (as happens in many countries), and the rest by private ownership—a mixed economy."

On the question of a "mixed economy", Tony Bloom has reported that the ANC leaders "in the discussion on nationalisation ... used the example of Sweden as an ideal." (*Financial Mail* 11/10/85)

It is true that, in the 25 years of the exceptional post-Second World War capitalist boom, the Swedish workers achieved huge advances in their standards of living.

But the Swedish economy has remained under the domination of monopoly capitalism.

In the "mixed economy" of Sweden in 1984, 85% of all companies, employing three quarters of the business-sector workforce, were privately owned.

Six of the ten largest firms in Sweden are in the engineering sector, the heart of the economy, which produces 45% of output. Five of these firms—Electrolux, Asea, Ericsson, Saab-Scania, and SKF—are controlled by one individual, Peter Wallenberg, who also controls Sweden's largest bank. (Asea is one of the companies presently in dispute with MAWU in SA over wages.)

If the Swedish workers achieved advances in living standards in the past, this was not a product of the good-heartedness of the capitalist class. It was imposed on them by the strength of the working class. **And this was made possible by the fact that capitalism was still able to develop the productive forces in the advanced industrial countries.**

Today, however, capitalism is an increasingly rotten system. And because the "mixed economy" in Sweden remains a **capitalist** economy, the Swedish workers are under increasing attack from the bosses. Since 1976, real wages of Swedish workers have fallen by 10%,

while unemployment has doubled.

Even to sustain the Swedish welfare state has been achieved only by building up huge debts to the multi-national banks—and increasingly the ruling class is struggling, as in all major industrial countries, for cuts in public spending.

How then does Sweden, a capitalist country with a thin varnish of "social-democracy", provide any "model" for South Africa?

If this "mixed economy" is to serve as the guide, then the three (or seven) giant monopolies in South Africa would still remain the masters of the SA economy. They would time and again shift investment from one sector of the economy to the other—and from one country to another—as dictated by their life-blood: profit!

Break stranglehold

To "control" the monopolies, to turn production to "ensuring an equitable distribution of the wealth that we have"—to break the stranglehold of the monopolies on the economy—nothing will serve short of removing them from the private ownership of the capitalists and bringing them under the democratic and social control of the working class.

But to do this will mean an end to capitalism itself. It will mean replacing the laws of private profit and the anarchy of the market with an economy based on public ownership (nationalisation) and planning—the basis for a transition to socialism.

Of course, it will not be necessary for the working class to nationalise every small business and shop. Under workers' democratic rule the middle class will be released from the domination of the monopolies and the banks and play an important role in expanding the distribution of goods.

But there can be no half-way house between the domination of monopoly capital on the one hand—and an economy based on nationalisation and planning on the other.

The nationalisation of Anglo American, Barlow Rand, and Sanlam alone, together with the existing state-owned industries, would mean an end to capitalism. It would necessitate **breaking** the power of the capitalist

class politically—by overthrowing its state—and breaking it economically by taking the main means of production into public ownership. This means a fundamental transformation of society—a socialist revolution in fact.

If the ANC leadership is to uphold the nationalisation clause in the Freedom Charter, then it is self-contradictory to maintain that the Freedom Charter “does not even purport to destroy the capitalist system”, or that “everyone’s property will be secure.”

Measures short of this, on the other hand, such as “state participation” or “regulation” would prove totally toothless in restraining the domination of monopoly capital.

Given any scope for manoeuvre, the bourgeoisie, “liberal” or hardliners, will attend first and foremost to their own class interests, and continue their ruthless exploitation of the masses.

Capitalism, let us be warned, is a ravenous monster; sleep with it or embrace it and you are dead. It remains friendly to the masses only in so far as it is able to drain their blood without fuss.

Speaking on Radio Freedom (18/10/85) about the talks with the capitalists, Comrade Tambo admitted that they “cannot look forward to the kind of system that the ANC has in mind under the Freedom Charter” Yet, he claimed, these capitalists “will even join with forces that are set to destroy the (apartheid) system provided they are sure that the system will not be replaced with something worse for their economy, for their pockets, for their profits.”

Profit system

But what kind of “joining of forces” could this possibly be—between capitalists wanting nothing “worse” for their profits—and the overwhelming majority of South Africans, working people who are fighting against a profit system that cannot secure their needs?

The capitalist class will naturally resist the struggle to expropriate their monopolies to the bitter end—with all the means at their disposal, above all through the armed force of the state that defends them.

The SA revolution—even while its tasks of national liberation and democracy are politically central—is at the same time a socialist revolution.

To carry through the nationalisation of the monopolies, and to bring them under democratic control and management, it will be necessary for the working class to **defeat and dismantle** the apartheid state machine, and replace it with the democratically-organised state of the working class.

When Comrade Tambo gives assurances to the capitalists that “Everyone’s property will remain secure” and that the Freedom Charter “does not even purport to destroy capitalism”, he is, unfortunately, not only diluting the programme of the Charter, but **failing to arm the masses in struggle with an understanding of the tasks that it will be necessary to undertake in order to achieve national liberation, democracy, and a decent life for all working people.**

It is wholly inadequate for Comrade Tambo to maintain—as he did in his interview with the *Cape Times* that a clear policy on nationalisation can be left to a future “debate” where “free media, free expression, freedom of newspapers” etc exist. “Then, if the people want one form of distribution above another, well it must be like that.”

In the first place, what the people want is already explicitly stated in the Freedom Charter—and reaffirmed in the overwhelming popularity of the Charter in the movement today.

But, more importantly still, such a “free debate” will be impossible so long as the capitalist class retain their ownership of the media, and can shelter under the protection of their state.

Nor will the resistance of the capitalists be lessened by proclaiming that the Freedom Charter stands only for taking over the monopolies in order to “break them up” and transfer their component parts into other private hands. So long as they have the power, the owners of the monopolies would fight with equal determination at such a threat to the “laws” of private property.

In fact, the growth of monopolies under capitalism is an inevitable reflection of the growth of large-scale

production on a world scale. The diseases of capitalist society cannot be cured by attempting to return to “small-scale” production.

On the contrary, it is precisely the development of large-scale industry by capitalism internationally that has created the possibility of production in abundance to meet the needs of the whole of mankind.

The growth of monopoly is a symptom of the ripeness of capitalist society world-wide for a great leap forward—for the socialist revolution that will place control over production and society in the hands of the working masses themselves.

This is why the South African revolution—even while its tasks of national liberation and democracy are politically central—is at the same time a socialist revolution.

As Trotsky, the Russian Marxist, explained, the political strivings of the proletariat of colonial and semi-colonial countries are defined according to the law of uneven and combined development. The struggle for the most elementary achievements of national independence and democracy is combined with the socialist struggle against imperialism.

The capitalists claim to fear that, within the ANC, it is the South African Communist Party which stands for the nationalisation of industry and the socialist revolution. In *Work in Progress* (No. 39) journalist Howard Barrell puts forward the same position. “The South African Communist Party, which has a formal alliance with the ANC, has a more far-reaching programme for economic change, of course.”

Perhaps these views are encouraged by broadcasts such as that by comrade Joe Slovo, leading SACP member, on Radio Freedom (9/10/85), who said: “there can be no real true national liberation without social emancipation. And the Party has always maintained that if tomorrow black faces sit in (the) Union Buildings instead of white faces, but the economic distribution of wealth remains the same, there will be no liberation.”

But, Comrade Slovo, how will the

economic distribution of wealth be altered without bringing the commanding heights of production under the democratic control and management of the working class? And does this not require a conscious, openly declared struggle to abolish the capitalist system?

How then, Comrade Slovo, can you support the programme of the SACP for a "two-stage" revolution—in which the struggle against capitalism is postponed until national liberation has been 'achieved'—when, in your words, this means that the oppressed masses should first fight for "no liberation"?

Perhaps Comrade Slovo would deny that the SACP stands for such a "two-stage" revolution? Certainly, many SACP members are led to believe that the party has moved away from the old crude formulation of "stages" towards ideas of "uninterrupted" revolution. But the party leadership continues to be vague, deliberately constructing ambiguous formulas to keep at bay the demand of the workers and youth for an uncompromising struggle against capitalism.

"At the present stage of the revolution" writes leading SACP theoretician Jack Simons in *Sechaba* (June 1985) "the liberation movement aims to uproot national oppression and release the economy from control by transnational corporations. It is not directed against the owners of domestic capital."

But how, in the ownership of the South African monopolies, is it possible to separate "foreign" from "domestic" capital? They are bound up together. What are Anglo-American, Barlow-Rand and Sanlam if not domestic, South-African based monopolies?

If the struggle is not against these "owners of domestic capital", then against which capitalists is it directed? Whether the monopolies dominating SA are defined as "transnational" or "domestic" their nationalisation is essential as a **first step** in our liberation. And this involves a conscious struggle led by the working class against capitalism and for the socialist transformation of society.

Simons justifies this programme with the scandalous remark that "there is a Congress realisation that most peasant-workers, who form the

bulk of the working class under apartheid, are not yet class conscious enough or ready for the adoption of a socialist solution."

Yet some of these same so-called "peasant-workers" (who in reality are nothing more or less than workers) were in the course of 1985—and some of them as genuine communists in the name of the SA 'Communist' Party—putting up wall-posters in Cradock and elsewhere calling for workers' control of production.

Why does the SACP leadership refuse to put forward a programme for combining the struggle for national liberation with the struggle for the socialist transformation of society led by the working class? The answer lies in their dependence, going back decades now, on the privileged bureaucratic rulers of the Soviet Union.

While capitalism has been overthrown in the Soviet Union, and replaced by a planned economy, there is not a society of equality or socialism, but monstrous privilege and inequality maintained by the bureaucratic elite. Far from being 'Marxists' or 'socialists' (as the capitalists maintain), they are terrified of a victory for the working class and workers' power anywhere in the world.

This is because workers' democracy and genuine socialism would be a beacon to the working class in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, etc, to overthrow the bureaucracy and take power into their own hands.

The ANC leadership, unfortunately, far from being prodded in a socialist direction by the SACP, is encouraged by the 'Communist' Party leaders to make declarations against a socialist policy.

All supporters of the ANC throughout South Africa must demand of the ANC leadership that it stands firm in the struggle for the full implementation of the Freedom Charter.

To carry that struggle to victory, what will be necessary is the mobilisation and organisation, as a conscious revolutionary force, of the full power of the working class at the head of all the oppressed, under the banner of the African National Congress.

**Forward with the Freedom Charter!
Build a mass ANC on a socialist program!**

Why a National Convention cannot transfer power to the people

By Richard Monroe

Last year, Van Zyl Slabbert and Gatsha Buthelezi established the National Convention Movement, whose "eventual objective", states its manifesto, is "the calling of a National Convention by the government of the day at which representatives of all the people of South Africa will thrash out an agreed constitution".

The idea stems from the National Convention of 1908-09, at which representatives of the South African ruling class, with the agreement of British imperialism, drew up the segregationist constitution of the Union of South Africa.

Resurrected

Today the idea is resurrected by sections of the ruling class because of their enormous fear of the developing revolutionary movement of the mass of the oppressed. They can see that neither old-style apartheid repression, nor Botha's neo-apartheid combination of repression and 'reforms' is sufficient to bring



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this movement to a halt.

But could such a Convention play any role in bringing about national liberation and democracy? Could it even come into existence?

In 1981, when the idea of a National Convention was being raised in the same circles, *Inqaba* (No 3) published an article, by Daniel Hugo and Paul Storey, suggesting how the question should be approached by our movement.

Conspiracy

We explained that, for the liberals, a National Convention represented "not a vehicle for the orderly concession of democratic rights and equality to the majority, but a conspiracy against democracy and against equality." The *Rand Daily Mail* (11/4/1981), we said, came as near as we could expect to spelling out the liberal bosses' National Convention strategy when it wrote:

"Nationalists say a convention would be a 'sell-out' of the whites. On the contrary, it is probably the only way to safeguard the security of whites in South Africa over the long term.

"Whites have white rule. Blacks want majority rule. An agreement has to be struck somewhere in between."

Every section of the capitalist class

is relentlessly opposed to majority rule in South Africa—to one-person-one-vote in an undivided country—because they know the black majority demand this to secure the power to demolish the whole system of cheap labour, and carry through the implementation of the Freedom Charter. The demand for majority rule poses a deadly threat to the survival of capitalism itself.

That is why the 'liberal' capitalists and their representatives are constantly cooking up new divide-and-rule schemes for the 'confederal' or 'federal' redivision of the country. The intention of such schemes, as COSATU explained at its founding conference, "is to maintain power and control in the hands of the present minority and perpetuate an oppressive and exploitative system."

The National Convention strategy is, on the one hand, a recognition that state repression alone is no longer sufficient to maintain the rule of the capitalist class over the majority. At the same time, as *Inqaba* pointed out in 1981—in key passages of the article which we republish here—the liberals "take it for granted that the convention would meet under the guns and supervision of the existing state."

This state is based on white minority rule: its strength depends on the ability of the ruling class to enlist to its support a murderous armed force recruited from the ranks of the privileged whites.

In the same way, the 1908-09 National Convention derived its constitution-making 'authority', not from any popular mandate, but from the armed power of British imperialism, which had recently conquered the Boer Republics.

At any negotiations among 'all political interest groups' in South Africa held under the guns of this state, the representatives of the 'liberal' capitalists would not be there to discuss the transfer of power to the people. Their aim would be to get their divide-and-rule schemes adopted. **With the weapon of state power in their hands, they would be out to bribe, trick, and threaten black leaders with a following among the masses into accepting these undemocratic schemes for dividing the oppressed.**

Through the experience of revolutionary struggle against the regime and the bosses, an understanding of these pitfalls of the 'National Convention' has become increasingly widespread among active workers and youth. Among them, the idea is overwhelmingly rejected. The slogan that "Big business and the state are two sides of the same bloody coin" expresses the recognition that, to achieve national liberation, the bosses' state must be smashed.

Inqaba supporters have been in the forefront of explaining and arguing for this position.

Shift

Increasingly, this standpoint is reflected also in the official bodies of the movement. Thus, in the period since the launching of the United Democratic Front in 1983, there has been a noticeable shift in its stand on this question.

In 1983, leaders of the UDF wrote to President Botha. If, they stated, all political prisoners were released, exiles recalled, and organisations unbanned, "The chosen leaders of all our country's people can then sit together in an atmosphere free from fear and suspicion to work out a constitution based on the will of the people—a constitution acceptable to all." (*SASPU National*, October 1983).

But, even were the government to carry out those demands, how would

this create "an atmosphere free of fear and suspicion"—while there remained in existence not only the state's prisons and torture-chambers, but its murderous armed forces which the ruling class could at any time order into the factories, mines, docks, or townships?

Under the pressures of the subsequent revolutionary upsurge, delegates to the UDF National Council in April 1985 showed their awareness of these realities. According to the *Sowetan* (9/4/1985), among the demands of this Council meeting were the "disbanding of the SADF, Koevoet, the SAP and all other repressive apparatuses."

Clearly the delegates to the Council could not have supposed that the ruling class would voluntarily disband the central instruments that sustain its power over the masses. What this resolution reflected was the recognition that national liberation could not be achieved unless the movement itself took up the task of organising to carry out the complete dismantling of the bosses' state.

UDF

Murphy Morobe, UDF publicity secretary, partially echoed this position in explaining, later in the year, why the UDF would not affiliate to the National Convention Movement. "The end product of such a (National) convention", he stated "would be some form of 'power sharing' between various groups—a solution that implies that all participants will have to agree to some form of compromise."

"For the UDF negotiation does not mean South Africa's 'leaders' can sit around and work out a solution while the people sit outside the conference room waiting to hear the outcome."

"The myth is that a think-tank of leaders meeting in effect under the shadow of the South African Defence Force or the South African Police and over the heads of the people will be able to arrive at an acceptable deal. This is a fundamentally undemocratic and elitist view." (*The Star*, 22/10/1985. Our emphasis—Editor)

In this respect, Comrade Morobe's position on the National Convention

No to a capitalists' National Convention! Yes to a Revolutionary Congress of the People!

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In his New Year message for 1981, the ANC President, Comrade Tambo, specifically dealt with the question of a national convention.

Correctly, he points out that the call for a national convention is a "call for action" as long as the regime opposes it, and that a national convention could only come about as a consequence of bitter struggle.

The problem arises, however, when the ruling class finds itself with no alternative but to resort to the tactic of the National Convention itself. With this problem, and all its attendant dangers, comrade Tambo unfortunately does not deal.

"The national convention we are talking about," he says, "is one which would be a democratic forum vested with sovereign powers. It would bring together the leaders and representatives of the people of South Africa, and would produce a blueprint of the kind of South Africa that would meet the aspirations of the majority."

Also the SA Communist Party has this demand in its programme.

But a number of important issues arise from this conception, which it is very important that the leadership consider and clarify.

Firstly, the National Convention proposed by the capitalists and their hangers-on would not be a "democratic forum" at all.

is correct. Unfortunately, he did not pursue the logic of his argument to its full conclusions. He continues:

"The UDF believes that any negotiation must be the product of a democratic process which involves the masses. After all, the outcome of negotiation requires mass acceptance if peace is to be attained."

"A climate favourable to mass participation needs to be created. This means that the African National Congress and other political organisations must be unbanned. All detainees and political prisoners must be released unconditionally. Apartheid must have been totally

A democratic forum would be a public assembly to which the people in every workplace, township and rural locality send delegates in proportion to their numbers, elected on the basis of one person one vote—and subject to immediate recall to ensure that their electors' wishes are strictly carried out.

No class, group or party would be entitled to a greater voice in such an assembly than corresponds with its support among the people.

But the capitalists—even the most 'liberal'—have in mind no such thing. They want negotiations (if possible behind closed doors) where, far from submitting to the will of the majority, they intend to manipulate, bribe and blackmail, using all their economic power and the threat of the military-police apparatus, in order to secure their interests.

Consequently, on the count of democracy, our demand can have nothing in common with the 'National Convention' idea of the capitalists.

Secondly, the National Convention proposed by the capitalists and their hangers-on would not in reality have "sovereign powers" at all. They take it for granted that the convention would meet under the guns and supervision of the existing state. And that state is nothing but the instrument for capitalist dictatorship and minority rule against the majority.

The majority can be truly sovereign only to the extent that the existing state is demolished and democracy secured by the arming of the people.

Therefore the very conditions which

dismantled and there must be free political activity.

"These are not bargaining chips—they are conditions which must prevail for democratic participation in free negotiations."

"When we call for the release of Nelson Mandela it is not so that he can be whisked off to some top level negotiations behind closed doors (assuming that he would allow this). We demand that Mandela and all other political prisoners and detainees be released to play their full role in the development of a mass-based democratic participation."

"It is meaningless to push for a na-

comrade Tambo attaches to the 'national convention'—if consistently adhered to—would make it the opposite of the 'National Convention' which is now conceived of as the **last resort** by the 'liberal' bourgeoisie.

Would it not be better if we in the ANC spelled out clearly to the people that the capitalist 'National Convention' would be a deception and snare which no democrat—let alone socialist—can support?

And would it not be clearer if, instead of using the term 'national convention' for our demand—the same term which is used by the liberal tricksters—we reached into the fighting traditions of our movement and raised the slogan of a **Revolutionary Congress of the People?**

The Kliptown Congress of the People in 1955 itself adopted a 'blueprint'—the **Freedom Charter**—which, whatever its inadequacies, contained the demand for the takeover of the mines, banks and monopoly industries from capitalism, the central element in a revolutionary programme.

But no part of that programme could be implemented because power was not in the hands of the working people. The Congress itself was surrounded and invaded by the armed racist thugs of the bosses' state.

Economically and politically, the interests of the working class and all exploited people are directly opposed to those of the capitalist class. The working class needs to organise its full forces and struggle **independently** of all bourgeois influence, so as to rally round it all the oppressed for the **destruction of the capitalist state and the establishment of a democratic workers' state.**

The capitalists, far from surrendering their power, will fight frantically to retain it. Nor does guerilla action provide the means to overthrow the present regime and the present state. This state will only be defeated by the mass of society rising, arms in hand, against it.

tional convention while the basic preconditions have not been met."

All the oppressed demand the release of Mandela and all political prisoners and detainees, and the unbanning of banned organisations. But, even if such preconditions were met, a National Convention would still be meeting under the 'shadow', or, more accurately, the brute force) of the SADF and the SAP—**unless and until these have been dismantled.** That can only be brought about through the **armed power of the mass movement itself**—and this means the **overthrow of the ruling class's state power.**

But then the task of the movement will be, not constitutional negotiations with the representatives of the defeated capitalists, but the establishment of the democratic organs of the rule of working people.

This is why, in 1981, *Inqaba* suggested that it would be better if "we reached into the fighting traditions of our movement and raised" (as an alternative to the idea of a National Convention) "the slogan of a Revolutionary Congress of the People"—of a "public assembly to which the people in every workplace, township and rural locality send delegates in proportion to their numbers, elected on the basis of one person one vote—and subject to immediate recall to ensure that their electors' wishes are strictly carried out."

Precondition

The practical precondition for a Revolutionary Congress of the People—the condition necessary to ensure its **sovereignty** and ability to **implement** its decisions—would be that the **present state** had been **defeated** and its armed power dismantled and replaced by the **armed people.**

It is the vital responsibility of our leadership in its propaganda to prepare the whole movement with a clear understanding of the need to replace the present state machine with the democratic power of the working class—and to arm the movement clearly against the tricks and manoeuvres of the capitalists. Properly explained, the slogan of a Revolutionary Congress of the People could assist in this task.

In contrast, to explain that a National Convention inherently involves "some form of compromise" of the demands of the oppressed, and to **dismiss it only for now, while leaving open the possibility in the future for participating in this scheme of the liberals**—which seems to be Comrade Morobe's position—unfortunately fails to prepare the movement for its revolutionary tasks.

This is even more the case because the aims of the National Convention Movement are a utopian dream.

Sections of the capitalist class, their representatives, and, in the future,

even the government, can and will seek 'talks' and 'negotiations' with leaders of our movement. More bodies like Botha's new 'national statutory council' can and will be established.

But this will take place in a situation where the classes and races are becoming inevitably more and more polarised as the impasse of apartheid and capitalism deepens. The spectre of workers' revolution will more and more hang over the ruling class and the whites.

It is inconceivable, in this situation, that the state, undefeated, would become 'neutral' and that final constitution-making authority could be handed over to a 'National Convention' of representative leaders of the people.

The ruling class is searching desperately for a 'reformist' way forward. But at the same time, to hold the black masses in subjection, it depends utterly on the cohesion of the existing white-dominated state machine.

For some years the leadership of the PFP has based its political strategy, not on the prospect of winning an election, but on becoming a potential partner in a coalition government with the 'verligte' Nationalists. Such a coalition, they have hoped, would lay the parliamentary basis for calling a National Convention.

But now Van Zyl's Slabbert's resignation is a clear indication that this strategy lies in ruins.

Compromises

On the one hand, to sustain its parliamentary strategy, the PFP leadership has engaged in political compromises which have increasingly alienated its left-wing, particularly the youth. Recently, big conflicts have occurred over the PFP's attitude to conscription, and to participation in the coloured and Indian 'parliaments'.

Yet, on the other hand, in the ranks of the white electorate, the 'verligte' forces remain inevitably a middle-class minority. Launching the Convention Alliance, Slabbert stated that a National Convention would 'fail' if even Treurnicht were excluded from it! (*Star*, 25/9/1985) But

Treurnicht is gaining an echo among the ranks of the whites precisely on the basis of denouncing even Botha's timid 'neo-apartheid' plans as a 'sell-out' of white privilege and 'identity' to the black masses. How on earth could Treurnicht agree to participate in a National Convention intended to "share" power with the ANC?

To sustain National Party government, and the cementing together of the classes among the whites, Botha looks over his shoulder to the threat from his right, rather than towards the 'support' he might gain in coalition with the miniscule forces of the PFP.

The talk in the press of 35 'left-wing' Nationalist M.P.'s being ready to split with Botha and follow Slabbert if he stayed in parliament is laughably naive. How many of these M.P.'s would hold their seats after that if Botha called an election!

Slabbert's resignation, followed by that of Alex Boraine, results from a recognition that the pace of changes and realignments possible through white parliamentary politics will inevitably lag hopelessly behind the changes which the ruling class needs to make if it is to deal with the revolutionary polarisation of society and the challenge which it is now facing.

Slabbert is still for a National Convention. Yet how could a National Convention get off the ground without its constitution-making authority being authorised by "the government of the day" (the NCM's words), and parliament?

Military rule

If, as is possible at a later stage—parliamentary government is altogether dispensed with and direct military rule is introduced—could this perhaps 'clear the way' to a National Convention? Those who argue this forget that the maintenance of the present armed state power intact (or fundamentally so) would remain the first priority of a military regime—in fact, would all the more be its first priority. Such a regime would, indeed, be engaged in carrying out even more atrocious massacres against the black people than its predecessors.

The idea of real power being conceded to a National Convention

under such conditions is ridiculous. Yet, without the transfer of real power being on the agenda, it would be impossible for leaders of the movement to participate or remain in a 'National Convention'

Revolutionary pressure

The pressure on the ruling class for a National Convention is the reflection of the revolutionary pressures of the masses against apartheid and capitalism—a pressure exerted most directly upon the leaders of Congress.

Slabbert and Boraine now project for themselves the role of "honest broker" between "parliamentary" and "extra-parliamentary" forces. But what lies at the root of the polarisation between the supporters of the existing parliament and the extra-parliamentary movement is the question of state power.

On the one side are those who cling to capitalism, and who are thus compelled (however they try to hide it) to stand for the maintenance of the existing racist state. On the other side is a mass movement which, for the sake of its vital needs, is compelled to struggle for this state's overthrow.

Neither the 'liberal' capitalists nor the leaders of the movement, however much they might 'in principle' be willing to compromise, can in reality bridge this gulf in South Africa.

When, in the course of the revolutionary events that lie ahead, it becomes clear that the maintenance of the present state makes a compromise agreement through a National Convention impossible, then the representatives and leaders of the contending classes will face a stark choice—capitulation, or a fight to the finish.

The capitalists, however 'liberal', cannot surrender without a fight their historical position as owners of production and as ruling class. They will lean on the bloody state power as their ultimate line of defence—at the expense even of their extra-parliamentary representatives who continue to try to square an impossible circle.

The leaders of the movement—what choice would they face? With no alternative but abject surrender, the revolutionary black working class

will demand of its leadership nothing less than an uncompromising struggle for the conquest of state power.

At the same time, the National Convention strategy serves the liberal bosses as an important carrot to dangle before middle-class black politicians, in order to try to dilute the aims of our movement. This is why the leaders of the Convention Movement have been exerting such efforts to try and induce the leadership of the UDF to affiliate.

In November, its chairman, Jules Browde, claimed that "I've been in touch with influential UDF members who, in private, are encouraging towards the NCM advising us not to be deterred by the fact that they won't participate at this stage. I sympathise with their problems; so many UDF leaders are detained that bold policy decisions are difficult to take. But ultimately I believe that if the NCM takes off they will come in." (*Financial Mail*, 22/11/85)

Browde puts the cart before the horse. With Gatsha Buthelezi's remaining credibility as a figure of opposition to the regime dwindling even in KwaZulu—Natal, the Convention Movement is incapable of 'taking off' without the support of the UDF or the ANC.

In pursuit of precisely such support, the *Sunday Times* (12/1/86) gave credence to the story that "A dramatic new alignment of anti-government groups—backed by the ANC—is to be formed... The National Convention Movement (NCM) ... will be one of the members... Yesterday the NCM management committee confirmed it will actively support the move. It is understood the ANC has been in contact with various parties and preliminary discussions are well advanced. Further meetings in Lusaka are possible soon... Its prime objective, claim supporters of the idea, will be the forging of a climate which could lead to a negotiated settlement of SA's problems."

Contacted in Lusaka, ANC spokesmen repudiated the idea of "an organised entity"—but were reported as welcoming "greater unity of purpose and action and greater collaboration.... We proceed from the fact that there should be a greater unity and greater co-ordination between all those who serve the real interests of the people of SA. Because the ANC is an illegal organisation in

SA, it cannot participate in the process, but we remain available for consultation here in Lusaka." (*Sowetan*, 15/1/86)

This has only fuelled the speculation. The *Sunday Star* (19/1/86) reported that "The banned African National Congress (ANC) and the fledgling National Convention Movement (NCM) both say they want to talk to each other to form a broad front against apartheid.

"A spokesman for the ANC in Lusaka said this week that dialogue must first take place with the NCM before a decision can be taken on whether to form any broad front and whether such an arrangement should be formal or informal...

"...the Progressive Federal Party and Inkatha...have withdrawn from the management committee to reduce their profile and attract United Democratic Front membership.

"But the UDF has had nothing to do with the NCM and observers believe there is no prospect of co-operation unless the green light is given from Lusaka."

The ANC leadership should decisively and clearly reject the idea of an 'alliance', formal or informal, with any section of the bourgeoisie, including the National Convention Movement, or other bodies which may succeed it to serve the same purposes.

Real interests

Our movement is a non-racial movement. We welcome every white who breaks with the ruling class and identifies her or himself with the real interests of the overwhelming black majority of the people of South Africa.

But there is a fundamental difference between a pursuit of non-racial working-class policies and attempts to generate co-operation between fundamentally opposed class forces.

Let us be clear. Whatever the character of their membership, the PFP and the NCM—inside or outside parliament—are capitalist organisations, formed to further the interests of the capitalist class. In no way, as organisations, can they "serve the real interests of the people of South Africa."

Slabbert and Boraine have resigned from parliament. We can draw satisfaction from the setback that represents to Botha and to the capitalist PFP. But does that mean that our movement should 'congratulate' these bourgeois politicians and welcome them into the fold?

Have they now repudiated federalism? Will they now explain that the problems of South Africa cannot be solved without majority rule and the full implementation of the Freedom Charter?

Will they break with, and denounce, their backers among the monopolies and stand with the masses in the struggle against capitalist exploitation?

Those are the tests by which our movement is compelled to judge who "serve the real interests of the people of South Africa". Our task is not 'greater unity and coordination' with the PFP and the NCM, but to smash their influence by winning over to the aims of the movement those whom they mislead.

But, when it comes to the struggle against the state, it is not these bourgeois and upper middle-class whites who are the key. If the fundamental obstacle to the revolution lies in the strength of the white-dominated state-machine, then a fundamental task which opens up for the movement is to split the state on class lines—by neutralising and winning away the white workers and white troops who are its reliable core of support.

This task is not helped, but rather hindered, by dabbling in cozy chats and talk of "greater unity and coordination" with the friends of the capitalists.

In a New Year Speech, Comrade Tambo stated that "The time has come that our white compatriots should join the mass democratic struggle in their millions."

Those "millions" are mainly white workers, many soaked in vile racism, yes, and all enjoying privilege, yes—but working people, enslaved to the monopolists nevertheless. At present, they follow not Van Zyl Slabbert, but Botha, Treurnicht, Jaap Marais...

They cannot be won in big numbers to our struggle unless and until the revolutionary movement of the black working class has risen to its full power and really challenges the state with armed overthrow. And then they can be paralysed or won away from their racist right-wing

leaders only if they are given the confidence that our movement has the power, and the programme, for breaking the stranglehold of the monopolies, and ushering in a new society in which there can be democracy and security for all working people.

Unless the ANC leadership takes up the task in this revolutionary way—with no concessions to white privilege—these millions will remain as cannon-fodder for the ultra-right to sustain apartheid and capitalism in power.

Over time, our movement can build the power to split the whites and leave the rulers of society impotent.

"No programme"

The *African Communist* (1st Quarter, 1986) recognises that the businessmen backing the National Convention Movement "have no programme for genuine reform, only measures for the avoidance of revolution and the perpetuation of capitalism."

At the same time, it claims, "The ANC has made it abundantly clear...that there is no point in taking part in a National Convention until the power of the regime has been broken."

But, once the power of the regime is broken, what will be the point of a National Convention? Surely the *African Communist* could not be suggesting that, with the power of the bosses' state "broken", it will be the time to negotiate with the defenceless businessmen about "the perpetuation of capitalism."?

No comrades. Let the movement keep its eyes firmly on the task identified by the April 1985 UDF National Council—to defeat and dismantle the SADF, Koevoet, the SAP, and all the repressive apparatuses. For this purpose, let us carry on the task of building the mass movement with clear revolutionary aims and perspectives, to prepare the victory of the working class, to gain national liberation, and begin the building of socialism.

No political compromises with the capitalists or their representatives!

Forward to a Revolutionary Congress of the People!

Forward to workers' power, democracy and socialism! ■

Four ANC Marxists expelled—SA 'Communist' Party strikes factional blow

Inqaba has received the following statement (dated 31 July 1985) by Marxists recently expelled by the ANC in exile.

We reprint the statement for the information of our readers.

We also demand the unconditional reinstatement of these comrades, who have been expelled for no other 'crime' than putting forward policies in the interests of the working class.

With the flames of revolt sweeping through the townships and industrial areas of South Africa, all the forces of the liberation struggle should be concentrating their united efforts against the murderous apartheid regime and the capitalist exploiters. Yet the South African 'Communist' Party, which dominates the apparatus of the African National Congress in exile, has chosen this moment to turn its fire against Marxists in the ranks of the ANC itself.

(The SA 'Communist' Party, though claiming to be Marxist, stands

for Stalinism—ie for bureaucratic dictatorship over society on the lines of the Soviet Union today—and opposes the Marxist idea that workers' democracy is necessary for socialism.)

Four comrades, who were suspended by the ANC in London in 1979 for putting forward their ideas on policy, strategy and tactics in SACTU and the ANC, have now been expelled. What have the Marxists argued for over the years?

—That the working class movement in South Africa should be prepared politically and armed for insurrection against the racist, capitalist regime;

—That wholehearted support should be given to the growing independent trade union movement;

—That national liberation and democracy, together with the basic material needs of the working people, can only be achieved through the victory of the working class and the socialist transformation of South Africa.

Precisely as the correctness of these ideas is being proved in the arena of living struggle—when the leadership can no longer avoid shifting, albeit partially and in words, closer to these positions—those comrades who have most consistently put them forward within the ranks of the ANC have

been expelled. This was done without debate, and without the comrades being given a hearing—in blatant violation of the ANC constitution itself.

The expulsions have been carried out, not in the interests of the ANC, not as a serious step by ANC activists to protect the movement, but on the contrary in the narrow factional interests of the Stalinists.

The decision was made by the ANC's recent 'Consultative Conference' in Zambia (the first since 1969), where the vast majority of participants, being exiles dependent upon the official apparatus for their very existence, were effectively screened and controlled by the 'Communist' Party leadership. The Marxists were not allowed a voice in this conference.

CP disintegrating

The decision was announced on 23 July, in Britain, in the pages of the pro-Moscow *Morning Star*—days after Botha had announced the State of Emergency in South Africa. The British CP is disintegrating in the throes of a major split between Stalinism and liberal reformism. This



Comrades Nzo, Nkobi, Makgoti, Tambo and Hani of the ANC National Executive enjoy a joke at the June 1985 Consultative Conference while King Sabata Dalindyebo was speaking.

paper is the voice of the Stalinist faction, which openly supports the privileged bureaucratic dictatorship in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe against the masses' demands for a workers' democracy.

Writing on behalf of the ANC, comrade Francis Meli (a well-known SACP leader whose very name is constructed from the initials of the 'Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute' of Stalinist ideology in Moscow) describes the Consultative Conference.

"It is impossible," he writes, "to exhaust in a few paragraphs what was discussed in some days. But I need to mention a resolution which I think is important for the labour movement in this country. This is the text of the resolution:

"The Second National Consultative Conference of the ANC, held in Zambia June 16 to 23 1985, considered the decision of the Regional Political Committee in London to suspend the following:

1. Rob Petersen
2. Paula Ensor
3. Martin Legassick
4. David Hemson

"It found that, after having been suspended in 1979 by the London region of the ANC for their disruptive activities in SACTU, the group organised itself outside the ANC under the title, 'The Marxist Tendency within the ANC', and produced *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, a journal claimed to be produced by a 'Marxist wing' of the ANC.

Contacted trade unions'

"This group contacted trade unions and solidarity organisations in several countries using a mailing list stolen from SACTU...

"In violation of SACTU's policy, they have encouraged and maintained bilateral contacts with trade unions inside the country...

"Recently, some of them were arrested and expelled from Zimbabwe for activities contrary to the interests and independence of that country.

"Conference considers that the decision of the RPC in London to suspend this faction was correctly taken. It further resolves to expel the above-mentioned from the ANC."

It must be stated first and foremost that the organisational charges against the expelled comrades are groundless. Far from "disrupting SACTU", we played an active role, from 1976 to 1979, in reviving SACTU and re-establishing its paper *Workers' Unity*, which under CP control had become defunct. We played an active and constructive part also in units of the ANC. What the Stalinists regard as "disruptive activities", in fact, is any democratic questioning of their policies and methods.

Discussion

Far from organising "outside" the ANC, we continued the discussion of Marxist ideas only through the official channels controlled by the Stalinists themselves—until they stamped out discussion, using administrative measures, including the closing down of an entire committee, when they could not reply to our political arguments.

After we were unconstitutionally suspended, we maintained a clear and public position of loyalty to the ANC and commitment to the task of building the ANC on a mass basis of black workers and youth within South Africa. At the same time we had, of course, the revolutionary duty to continue to put forward our ideas within the movement and contribute as best we could to the clarification of programme, strategy and tasks.

In this context we certainly contacted trade unions and solidarity organisations in several countries, with which we maintain many fraternal links in a common cause. The claim, however, that we used "a mailing list stolen from SACTU" is a blatant lie which the leadership know to be a lie. The SACTU mailing list, created by our own efforts on metal addressograph plates, remained intact in the SACTU office when we were ejected. The addresses of "trade unions and solidarity organisations in several countries" are well known, not least to ourselves, and are a matter of public record. It requires no "stolen mailing list" to discover them.

This charge of a "stolen mailing list" is a classic example of Stalinist

smear tactics, unscrupulously used to cloud the issues when they can offer no political answer to their opponents' case.

If the organisational charges against us are groundless, the political charges merely bring to light the bankruptcy of the Stalinists' ideas.

They persist in maintaining outright opposition to direct links between the labour movement abroad and trade unions inside South Africa. It is scandalous that this position is endorsed without a murmur by the ANC Consultative Conference as official "SACTU policy".

For our part, we are proud to plead 'guilty' to "encouraging and maintaining bilateral contacts with trade unions inside the country". We are proud to be guilty of promoting direct support for the independent non-racial and black trade unions in SA and to have helped mount campaigns in support of strikes and boycotts called by these unions.

Our achievements in this regard have been all too modest—but among them has been the successful campaign (against the combined obstruction of the British and South African 'Communists') to secure recognition of the SA NUM by the British NUM.

Support ideas

We deny that we are "organised ... outside the ANC under the title 'The Marxist Tendency within the ANC'." However, individually, we support the ideas put forward in *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, the journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC.

A "tendency" is a current of opinion. There are many currents of opinion within the ANC—both in exile and in the broad mass movement which gathers under the ANC colours in the heat of the revolutionary struggle in South Africa.

There are, for example, tendencies which support compromise with the SA ruling class; which are prepared to accept less than "one person one vote" in an undivided South Africa; which are willing to water down the Freedom Charter and abandon the nationalisation clause; which are will-

ing to negotiate even the maintenance of influx control. In the main, these represent the confusion and vacillation of middle-class elements afraid of losing control to a working-class revolutionary movement.

On the other hand, there is the "tendency" of the great majority of the working class rank-and-file ANC members and supporters, some of whom are guerillas in the camps of the ANC outside South Africa, but most of whom are fighting in the mass battalions of the movement in the factories, mines, townships and schools inside South Africa.

Overwhelmingly these comrades are striving to bring about a thorough-going revolutionary transformation of South Africa, often at the cost of their own lives. They know that nothing less than the overthrow of the regime by the mass movement can bring genuine liberation. They know that for this purpose the movement must be powerfully organised, united, armed with clear policies, strategy and leadership, and ultimately equipped with the weapons necessary for a victorious insurrection. They demand to be free both of racist oppression and capitalist exploitation. They want a democratic and socialist South Africa.

Foursquare

Comrades of the Marxist tendency stand four-square together with the mass of ANC members and supporters in fighting for these goals. Fundamentally, Marxists explain that only through the conquest of power by the working class and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie can national liberation and democracy be achieved in South Africa, and the way opened to a socialist transformation. It is not through guerilla actions, but through the organisation and arming of the mass movement that this can be achieved. *Inqaba ya Basebenzi* sets out the policies, the perspectives, strategy and tactics which, from the standpoint of Marxist theory and the international experience of the working class movement, offers a way forward to victory.

What, then, of the SA 'Communist' Party? The SACP is more than a "tendency", more than an

organised faction in the ANC. It is a rigidly controlled bureaucratic apparatus, which leans for support upon workers in the ANC, but relies fundamentally on political and material aid from the ruling bureaucracy of the Soviet Union.

It proclaims "socialism" (Moscow-style) as its 'eventual' goal. In this way, and by the use of guerilla actions, it maintains its revolutionary credentials and holds on to its working-class supporters. But at the same time, within the ANC, it joins forces with and indeed props up the middle-class tendencies reinforcing their utopian idea that "democracy" can be achieved without a workers' revolution, by putting pressure for negotiations upon the ruling class.

Under the cover of the false "two-stage" theory—democracy "first", workers' rule and socialism only "later"—the CP leadership take their stand against the independent assertion of power by the black working class. In this they represent the policy of the Moscow bureaucracy, which fears the threat to its own dictatorial and privileged rule if revolutions in important industrial countries should bring to power regimes of genuine workers' democracy and socialism.

The clause in the expulsion resolution which refers to Zimbabwe makes the reactionary position of the Stalinists absolutely plain. Precisely what activities of any of the expelled comrades were "contrary to the interests and independence of that country"?

One of the four comrades (David Hemson) was arrested and deported from Zimbabwe for carrying on work of socialist education among black trade unionists and ZANU(PF) members. Using powers inherited from Smith, the white-led Zimbabwean CIO arrested him together with a number of leading black trade unionists and local militants of the ruling party with proven records of struggle.

What was their "crime"? They openly defended trade union rights in Zimbabwe against a new Labour Relations law which subjects the unions to total government control and wipes out their independence. They campaigned against corruption among trade union officials. They criticised the compromise of the Mugabe government with the capitalist class. They steadfastly maintained that only the socialist

transformation of Zimbabwe could guarantee the independence of Zimbabwe from IMF and SA imperialist pressures, and unite the workers and peasants across the tribal divide. While critically supporting ZANU(PF) against its bourgeois enemies, they posed this task before the workers' movement and the youth in Zimbabwe, urging the closest links of mutual support with the revolutionary working class movement in South Africa.

Stalinist influence

Yet the ANC leadership, under Stalinist influence, describe this as "contrary to the interests and independence" of Zimbabwe—and that is endorsed by the Consultative Conference without a peep of protest!

Comrades of the ANC leadership, are you now openly defending the policy of the Mugabe regime in consolidating capitalism, defending the white farmers' land, bulldozing urban squatters, taxing workers and promising not to nationalise the property of the South African companies and other imperialists who exploit Zimbabwe? To find favour with Mugabe, are you now prepared to support the imprisonment and torture of genuine trade unionists and socialists?

Have the comrades forgotten even their fellow-combatants from the 1968 Wankie campaign now serving indefinite detention without trial in Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison? We have always opposed the terrorist methods of the ex-ZIPRA 'dissidents' in Matabeleland, but have opposed no less the counter-terror of the Harare regime. Are you prepared to justify the national oppression of the Ndebele minority who suffer massacres, torture and detention? That is the consequence of bowing down uncritically to the present regime in Zimbabwe, and of failing to stand up for workers' unity, workers' power and socialism which are the only way forward in Southern Africa.

On the vital questions of the South African revolution, as well as on the international issues, the Stalinists represent an obstacle to liberation—

within the ANC. Marxists in the ANC are duty-bound to oppose their ideas and their influence, and struggle for the building of the ANC on the basis of correct ideas. Neither we, nor any class-conscious worker aware of the facts, could agree to submit and abandon our revolutionary ideas merely because the SACP presently holds effective control of the ANC apparatus in exile and is thus capable of "expelling" us.

In fact, these expulsions—six years after we were suspended and our ideas declared dead and buried by the leadership!—merely confirm the growing strength of Marxism within the movement. The expulsions are intended as a warning by the bureaucracy to the rank-and-file. That is why they have been carried out precisely at this time of enormous revolutionary ferment within South Africa.

Not deterred

Together with the many other comrades in the ranks of the ANC, the UDF, the trade unions and the youth movement in South Africa who support the ideas of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, we will not be deterred by these expulsions any more than we were by the suspensions in 1979. No administrative measure taken by the Stalinists in their own narrow factional interests can separate us from the movement. No amount of expulsions will halt the spread of Marxist ideas.

We remain determined to build the ANC as an effective vehicle for the unity of the revolutionary movement and the conquest of power by the working class. We are confident that we will be reinstated with honour to full formal membership of the ANC once substantial numbers of workers and youth become conscious of the issues and the facts, and take into their own hands the task of building and transforming the ANC.

FOR A MASS ANC WITH A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME!

FORWARD TO WORKERS' POWER, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM!

Statement issued in London, 31 July, 1985, by expelled comrades.



Have you read *Inqaba's* publications on SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES?

—South Africa's impending socialist revolution

(published in March 1982; £1.85 including postage)

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Attack on ANC Marxists is an attack on ANC's socialist youth

by Bernard Fortuin

Editor's note: The author has been active in pro-ANC youth and community organisations in SA since 1976. Like many others of his generation of fighters, he has been imprisoned repeatedly by the security police.

Here he answers the recent barrage of attacks on Marxists within the ANC, which was opened by the leadership in exile in June 1985 with the expulsion of four ANC members.

The expulsions were followed by articles in *Sechaba* and the *African Communist* attacking from a right-wing standpoint the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, the Southern African Labour Education Project, and all those in the movement fighting for workers' power and socialism.

June 16 is undoubtedly one of the most important dates of the South African revolution. It marks the entry of the working-class youth into the arena of mass struggle.

Since the events of 1976, youths have died in their hundreds, and have demonstrated supreme heroism in the face of a monstrous killing machine—the SADF and SAP. Yet the will of the working-class youth to struggle remains unconquerable.

June 16, 1985—an historic occasion—the first ANC conference

in 15 years. It is sad and surprising that this Consultative Conference in Zambia chose to attack the Marxists in the ANC and in particular the fighting socialist youth.

Capitalism in South Africa faces an unprecedented crisis, rising inflation, bankruptcies, mass unemployment, falling profits, and it has responded with an attack on the entire working class. More than 1000 people have died in the last 18 months, mostly at the hands of the state, during the most sustained uprising against the bosses and the regime.

Conference

It is at the 1985 Consultative Conference, where our movement faced the challenge to arm the youth with correct perspectives on the nature and tasks of the South African revolution, that it chose to expel four Marxists and to warn socialist youth. In his speech to the Conference comrade Tambo showed alarm at the identification of the ANC with socialism and the growing influence of Marxism in our movement!

He said:

"... significant numbers of democratic activists, particularly from among the youth, see the ANC as a socialist party and project it as such... It might be appropriate at this stage to refer also to the formation **within the ANC** of ... the 'Marxist Tendency' within the ANC." (Conference Report, p.13. Our emphasis)

In attacking the expelled Marxists, comrade Tambo appeals to the youth to reject Marxist ideas:

"Members of this group are no longer within our ranks. It is, however, true that some of **their ideas have penetrated** sections of the democratic movement **inside our country**. These need to be combated..." (p.12. Our emphasis.)

Marxism has taken root in the

working-class movement in South Africa because it is capable of arming the workers and youth with perspectives, on the basis of experience in day-to-day struggles, to see the source of their misery—capitalism.

It is ironic that comrade Tambo and the ANC leadership oppose the ideas of Marxism and the attraction of the youth to socialism, while throughout South Africa the black workers and youth struggling against the state and bosses chant:

"Viva Tambo Viva! Viva Socialism Viva!"

The attacks on Marxists, socialist youth and workers in the ANC were recently repeated in the *African Communist* (No. 104, 4th quarter 1985) by Nyawuza, in an article entitled: "New 'Marxist' Tendencies and the Battle of Ideas in South Africa". This attack came at the same time that the ANC executive (with Communist Party endorsement) was meeting with the chief representatives of the South African capitalist class, whilst the National Union of Mineworkers engaged in battle with the same bosses!

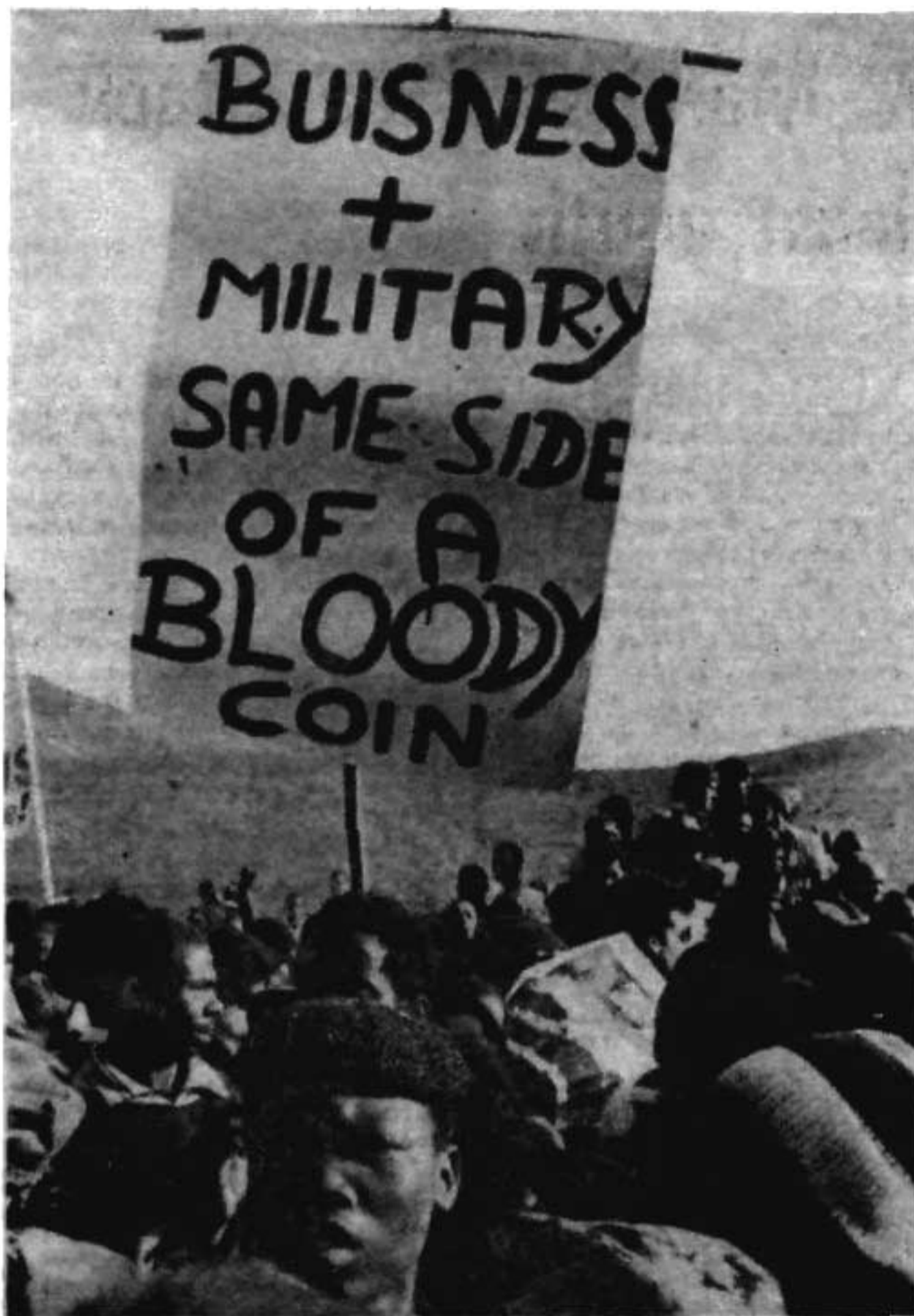
It was Mike Rosholt, chairman of Barlow Rand, who first attacked FOSATU for preparing workers to gain control over production. Nyawuza's attack on Marxists, socialist youth and workers repeats **this** attack:

"There are people who advocate 'workers' control' over production as the main objective of working-class organisation and maintain that the hope of achieving this objective raises working-class consciousness." (p.56-7)

In the most paternalistic and racist argument Nyawuza states:

"The problem with people advocating 'socialism now' is that they expect those Blacks who cannot read or write to run socialist industries and mines... The result would be an economic crisis." (!!) (p.58)

In this way Nyawuza, the ANC and SACP leadership directly attack



workers who are engaged in struggle against the bosses in South Africa with the same arguments used by the bosses and the regime. The workers and youth do not accept this argument though.

At Printpak in Industria recently, ninety workers seized control and occupied their factory for two-and-a-half weeks in support of a victimised comrade. The workers declared:

"Factories are what they are today because of the workers. The occupation gave ... workers a chance to discuss many issues, especially the question of control. Who controls the factories? It is clear the workers are the rightful owners." (*SASPU National*, December 1985)

This factory is a subsidiary of

Barlow Rand and interlinked with Anglo American, whose bosses the ANC executive had 'talks' with. Is the expulsion of Marxists and the attacks on youth who 'project' the ANC as a 'socialist party' an attempt to allay the fears of the bosses—like Anglo American—who dominate the economies of the entire Southern Africa?

The 'Communist' Nyawuza's attack on socialism and workers' control is an insult to comrade Barayi, the president of COSATU and an ANC activist in the 1950s—who in his speech at the Durban rally called for the nationalisation of the mines, factories, plants of the major monopolies on a socialist basis and

the release of Mandela to head a workers' government.

The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC not only stands for nationalisation (under workers' control and management) of the factories, mines, farms etc of the monopolies. We also stand for democratic workers' control over all instruments of political, social and economic power. This can be achieved through the full implementation of the Freedom Charter under workers' rule.

National liberation

Nyawuza correctly points out that: "The real ... aim of these new(?) 'Marxists' is to reject the two-stage theory of our revolution." Quite childishly he accuses Marxists of 'marginalising' the national question and regarding "class exploitation" as the only "real oppression".

Nyawuza and the ANC/SACP leadership falsely **separate** the struggle of the black majority for democracy and power from the struggle for socialism. Marxists have consistently argued that the tasks of national liberation and of overthrowing capitalism are indissolubly linked, and this finds its concrete expression in the day-to-day struggles of the masses.

The struggle of black workers and youth throughout South Africa arises from the fact that the vast majority of our people are denied democratic rights and are divided along 'tribal' lines on the basis of the cheap labour system of capitalism.

It is in this context that the demand for one person one vote in a united South Africa is a revolutionary demand. It is with this understanding that the black workers and youth chant:

"Viva Tambo Viva! Viva Socialism Viva! Viva ANC Viva!"

Marxists are also accused by Claris, a writer in *Sechaba* (August 1985), of having a "distrust" of community organisations. It is said:

"The argument that the struggle in South Africa should be led by the working class organised in the trade unions has as a corollary the argument that political organisations (such as the ANC) and community organisations are potential rivals to the trade union

struggle because they contain middle class elements which dilute the strength of the working class."

This is a red herring and is misleading. The Marxists have always argued that the youth and workers in the community organisations together with the organised workers in trade unions should build **A MASS A.N.C. ON A SOCIALIST PROGRAM.**

Mass organisations

There is nothing middle-class about the demands and struggles of the mass community organisations. From DHAC, CAHAC, Soweto Civic Association, to COSAS, SOYCO, CAYCO, PEYCO etc—the struggles of community organisations have articulated the demands of the working class.

The struggle against pass laws, high rents, gutter education, removals, high prices, community councils and management commit-

tees is a struggle against capitalism. The township youth have not only revolted against the education system but against capitalism and white domination. There is no future for young people on the basis of capitalism.

It is no accident that the revolt of 1984-85 has been most sustained in the Eastern Cape where youth unemployment is as high as 80% and the region faces rapid de-industrialisation.

It is no accident that black youth in the Western Cape refused to write their final exams. There is no future for the youth under capitalism, therefore they dare to:

"FIGHT FOR AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIALIST EDUCATION SYSTEM BASED ON THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS" (position of school boycott committee in the Western Cape).

Despite admonitions from the ANC/SACP leadership in exile, the black working-class youth of South Africa will continue to 'project' the ANC 'as a socialist party' to achieve their liberation.

Claris's suggestion of an inherent rivalry between trade unions and community organisations because the latter "contain middle class elements" poses the problem falsely. The fact that community organisations have been dominated by middle-class elements (something which has to be consciously combated) does not alter the fundamentally working-class nature of their membership and their struggles.

The rent strike by more than 350 000 residents in the Vaal Triangle is not middle-class in orientation neither does it weaken trade union struggles. It is a struggle by the working class in defence of its living standards, kept alive particularly by the heroism of the working-class youth.

In 1985 four Marxists have been expelled at a time when the ANC leadership has opened 'talks' with SA's monopoly capitalists. Let us not forget that these comrades were suspended in 1979 when the ANC leadership held secret talks in London with Gatsha Buthelezi.

The Marxists in the ANC have always argued against political dealings with the capitalists or with their puppets such as Buthelezi. Today even the ANC leaders denounce Buthelezi as a traitor—but previously they gave him credibility, just as they are now giving credibility to the capitalists in many workers' eyes. This is very wrong.

Nyawuza admits that there are classes "within the black community" (p.53) but argues that "all of them have a real interest in putting an end to colonial oppression." Collaborators and middle-class elements who support the regime are dismissed as corrupt "individuals" (p.54); there is no analysis or understanding of their material interests in the maintenance of the Apartheid State.

Interests

The failure to identify correctly who are the "classes within the black community" leads to the failure to identify their different interests.

The black middle class in South Africa is not a single force with a distinct and unvarying progressive interest in ending oppression. The middle class have no **independent** basis of existence in present-day economy and society, and therefore no **in-**



A youth in action against the forces of the state in a Western Cape township.



Near Pretoria, youth march under the ANC banner at the funeral of a two-month old baby, asphyxiated by teargas.

dependent class interest.

Their political role changes with different phases and intensity of the class struggle. They veer between the working class and the capitalist class in the course of the struggle between these irreconcilable antagonists.

There are middle-class strata like the teachers, petty traders, lower middle-class professionals, small landowners who are closer to the working class in lifestyle than to the capitalist class. They can be drawn to the working class in action. This does not preclude them from playing a treacherous role when the workers' movement is weakened or its political and organisational independence is not safeguarded.

There are other strata amongst the black middle class whose interests depend upon the Apartheid State. These strata in privileged positions in the police and army, the administration boards and community councils, the tricameral stooges, but more particularly those in the bantustans—the

bureaucrats, the larger landowners associated with the tribal authorities—are dependent on the maintenance of the **present state system** for their existence.

There are those who, like Buthelezi and Mangope, have a certain base of support among sections of the working class, but their strength rests in reality on the strength of the Apartheid State.

State

The Apartheid State is the instrument of capitalist dictatorship in South Africa; the instrument of the oppression and exploitation of the black working class essentially. It is for this reason that workers and youth have reacted with such violence against black middle-class elements who collaborate with the state and use the system to enrich themselves.

In SA most of the black and even sections of the white middle class (together with white workers) can be won over to the side of the revolution through the strength and unity of the black working class.

This will be achieved through the mass mobilisation of organised workers in trade unions and community organisations, the youth and the unemployed in particular, on an **uncompromising program for overthrowing the Apartheid State and capitalism.** It will not be achieved through attacking Marxists in the ANC in an attempt to calm the nerves of the capitalists and their hangers-on.

Marxism

Marxism has found an echo amongst black youth and in the growing trade union movement. The ANC/SACP leadership argue, in the words of Nyawuza: "All this ... poses a challenge to us to strengthen and articulate our inter-class unity." (p.56)

Marxists in the ANC call on the ANC/SACP leadership to identify those who make up this "inter-class unity" in our movement.

We are all for **unity in action** with those of the middle class prepared practically to come over and fight **on the workers' side.** Does the leadership have anyone else in mind for "our inter-class unity"?

Perhaps Harry Oppenheimer, Gavin Relly, Van Zyl Slabbert?

There can be no unity between capitalists (or their agents) and the black workers and youth fighting for **A MASS A.N.C. ON A SOCIALIST PROGRAM**—the only program which can fully mobilise and unite the working class, win over sections of the middle class, defeat the Apartheid State, and lead to our national and social liberation.

Marxists continue to build the ANC on this basis inside the country despite the attacks and warnings of the ANC/SACP leadership.

Along with the youth and workers, Marxists are imprisoned, shot and attacked by the vicious state machine. And along with the workers' movement and the youth, we will build a **MASS A.N.C. OF THE WORKING CLASS** to strive for the socialist transformation of South Africa. ■

"Sabotaging machinery" is not the workers' method

A broadcast by the ANC's Radio Freedom has called on workers to "intensify their strike actions by sabotaging machinery, destroying documents, and making sure that commodities coming off assembly lines are useless..." (quoted in *Anti-Apartheid News*, September 1985)

"By so doing we will force the capitalists to realise that ours is a country at war, and that their profits are in danger," the broadcast said.

NIMROD SEJAKE, a founder member of SACTU, secretary of the Transvaal Iron and Steel Workers' Union and an ANC Treason Trialist in the 1950s, explains why this call by the ANC leadership is wrong and cannot advance the liberation struggle of the working people.

It is dangerous to the revolution, self-defeating and an act of desperation for the ANC leadership in exile to exhort the working class in South Africa to "sabotage industry". Destruction of machinery is not the working-class method of combat against the capitalists who exploit them.

Sabotaging machinery was a method of resistance attempted by workers against their employers in Europe when the workers' movement was in its infancy and workers lacked a sense of their collective power to take strike action. Machine-breaking (e.g. by the 'Luddites' in England) died out well over a century ago because it was ineffective.

Engels explained that such actions were inevitably isolated and, "When the momentary end was attained, the whole weight of social power fell upon the unprotected evil-doers and punished them to its heart's content..." (*Collected Works*, vol. 4, p. 503)

In *Capital* (vol. 1, ch. XIII) Marx wrote: "Time and experience were



Nimrod Sejake addresses a labour movement meeting in Britain.

needed before the workers could ... come to direct their attacks, not against the material instruments of production (machines), but against the particular social form in which these instruments are used"—namely capitalist exploitation itself.

Strike action

The classic method of such a struggle, developed by the working class, is to combine in large numbers and use their power as the producers of wealth to halt production through strike action.

When workers doing forced labour under fascist regimes in the past have smashed machinery, this was in a situation where their organisations had been destroyed and they could not take collective action. Does anyone still think that is the situation in South Africa—after more than a decade of successfully rebuilding

strong democratic organisations in the factories and townships, and after the launch of COSATU uniting half a million workers?

Does "sabotaging machinery" or "making sure that commodities coming off assembly lines are useless" in any way add to or "intensify" strike action, as the ANC broadcast claimed? The answer is no.

The very moment that strike action is effectively mounted there is an absolute cessation of production. Absolutely nothing is produced through the assembly lines at that point in time and for so long as the condition lasts. How can "commodities" be "coming off assembly lines" when labour is at a standstill?

Sabotaging machinery, rendering commodities "useless" etc, would be a sign of the weakness or ineffectiveness of strike action—of the inability of workers in that place or at that time to unite and use their collective power. Far from "intensifying" strike action, sabotage is the method of individuals or isolated groups who divert attention away

from the real task—which is to organise and mobilise the working class to use its full social power in mass actions.

Once that mass power is asserted, once labour is withheld by the workers as in the case of strike action, sabotage of factories only introduces confusion and division into the ranks of the workers because it **adds nothing** to the strength of the action while **threatening the very existence of the workers' jobs**.

If machines are damaged, obviously the employers would be given the excuse of simply calling in the police to arrest the workers nearest to the broken machinery. The workers involved would easily be replaced and production soon continued.

The aim of sabotaging machinery, according to the broadcast, would be to "force the capitalists to realise ... that their profits are in danger." Effective strike action forces the capitalists to realise precisely that. Mass action is what terrifies them. Why should industrial sabotage, which has historically proved ineffective, achieve more than that?

Besides, the point is not to frighten the capitalists but to prepare the working class to take power and end both apartheid and capitalism. Sabotage of machinery etc. does not advance but obstructs that struggle.

The capitalists are rich and own factories because they exploit the working class. They pay the workers less than the value which the workers' labour produces. Their profits are the **unpaid labour of the working class**.

When they accumulate capital, investing profits in factories and machinery, they are accumulating value stolen from the working class. This they use to sustain their power

and exploit the workers further. The workers' task is to organise to take power and seize the means of production.

Unfortunately, over the years, the ANC leadership has failed to understand the enormous power of the working class and its tasks in the struggle for national and social liberation in South Africa.

Hence the leadership, backed up by the so-called 'Communist' Party, clings with amazing bulldog tenacity to the erroneous two-stage theory of struggle. They believe it will be possible to "achieve national liberation first" while postponing a workers' revolution and socialism to some unknown future period.

State power

That is a wrong approach to revolution flowing from ignorance of the science of Marxism. The nature of our struggle in South Africa is unequivocally a class struggle—a struggle that must be led by the working class for the **conquest of state power**, the elimination of apartheid, the achievement of democracy and national liberation by the black majority, and the overthrow of capitalism.

National liberation will only be won by using the method of **class struggle**.

Since the dissolution of the primeval communistic (early tribal) society, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle". (Marx)

If one advocates the destruction of machinery, that can only amount to

a senseless act of vandalism. It is a blow against the working class itself, devastating their property, namely, the means of production: factory plants, machines, etc, which are absolutely necessary for the production of the means of consumption to sustain the people—without which any "liberation" would be meaningless.

They are the very foundation on which a healthy, well-planned socialist economy must be constructed.

The means of production are the workers' inalienable legitimate property, which they and they alone have created and must retrieve intact. They have been stolen by the capitalist ruling class through exploiting workers. The need therefore arises for a socialist revolution spearheaded by the working class, in the period ahead to recover their property.

The speech delivered on the occasion of the launching of COSATU by its first President, comrade Elijah Barayi, that "COSATU will nationalise the mines and even take over some of the big businesses," has a mighty echo in the ranks of the revolutionary working class of the world, who are flexing their muscles to retrieve their stolen property. Comrade Barayi's speech is a barometer indicating the unfolding events of the new era of socialist ideas.

The launching of COSATU is the crossing of the Rubicon. The way forward now is through a clear direction of Marxism, the building of direct links on an ever increasing international scale to overthrow world capitalism and all the evils of apartheid starting with the immoral pass laws.

Forward to Socialism!



LESOTHO— Silent massacre by South Africa

by N. Qhobela
in Lesotho

At about 11.00 p.m. on 19 December 1985, Leon Meyer (Joe as he was known to his friends), who lived in Maseru West, rushed into a neighbour's house bleeding from gun shots.

His last words were, "Please help us. The boers are killing us. My wife is dead, please take care of our daughter." He collapsed and died before he reached hospital.

Alerted

Thus it was that Lesotho police got alerted to the fact that once again South Africa had come into the country to murder, on the pretext of wiping out ANC bases.

The neighbours had not heard any gun shots because this time the SA murderers had used silencers. The police were left wondering how many people had been killed. It was not until about 4.00 a.m. that seven other bodies were discovered at Hoohlo location, very close to the border with SA. A child who survived alerted neighbours with her non-stop cries.

Next day Lesotho woke to the news that six ANC refugees and three Basotho nationals had been murdered. (Rightly, five of the South Africans were refugees: the sixth was married to one of them.)

South Africa denied responsibility and instead declared it was the work



Units of Lesotho's Para-Military Force surround Chief Jonathan's headquarters on January 15 to "protect" him—four days before PMF head, General Justin Lekanya, overthrew Jonathan's twenty-year rule.

Helped to power in 1965 by South Africa, and again in 1970 when he clung to power by declaring the election result "abortive", Jonathan ruthlessly crushed opposition in Lesotho.

Behind Lekanya's coup, however, was South African power. Trying to recover some mass credibility, Jonathan since the mid-1970s had taken an anti-apartheid stance, partly leaning on Stalinist countries, and had

given assistance to the ANC.

The coup followed the December massacre of ANC members in Maseru, and took place while South Africa was enforcing an economic blockade on Lesotho (the second in two years).

South African imperialism moved to teach the lesson that none of the Southern African countries caught in its stranglehold can afford postures of defiance of its power.

For the Lesotho masses, the lesson is that there is no way forward to democracy, a decent life, or self-determination except in organising together with the strong South African working class to overthrow the bosses' apartheid state.

of LLA (the SA-backed military wing of the opposition Basotho Congress Party).

It could not have been LLA for several reasons:

- * the killings were too neatly planned and executed for LLA;
- * Joe, a South African, saw the killers before he died;
- * an eye-witness at Hoohlo saw white men outside the house where the seven bodies were found on the night of the killing;
- * two cars with SA registration numbers were found burnt out at the polo ground, to wipe out evidence.

It is easy enough to see why the SA regime would deny this particular massacre. Since the state of emergen-

cy was imposed, European governments have started to impose sanctions (although very limited), and the rising support for sanctions is having an effect on SA to be more careful how they carry out their 'clean-up' jobs.

To admit such an attack on Lesotho would shatter their already bad image abroad. It was easy for SA to make the LLA admit responsibility since SA houses, feeds and arms this group.

The nine people killed were found in only two houses. Seven were gathered together for what seemed to be a small party. The other two were in their house having just left the 'party'.

The owner of the house where this 'party' was had invited the seven from Mohale's Hoek, 110 km. south of Maseru. At the time when the SA soldiers came into the house, the owner had gone out of the house and was never seen again. His wife and small child had been sent on holiday to SA a few days before, and they have not been back since.

Died

The following ANC members died in the massacre: Themba Albert Mthembu, aged 28; Glen Davies, 26; Nomsa Mthethwa, 23; Morris (a visitor from SA, full name unknown); Leon Meyer, 25; and his wife Jaqueline Quin, 30.

The following Basotho nationals, all women, died (they were friends of the ANC members who died at Hoohlo): Boemo Tau; Mankaelane Mohatle; Amelia Lesenyeho Masoetsa.

Once again this massacre showed clearly the vulnerability of Lesotho within South Africa. From its position, size and very limited resources, it cannot economically or politically free itself from SA.

The recent military coup, for which Pretoria gave the go-ahead after strangling the country in a border blockade, shows this even more graphically.

The only hope for its liberation is a victory for a mass ANC in South Africa which, on the basis of workers' rule in that country, would allow genuine self-determination of Lesotho.

Lesotho's largest income earner is the labour it exports to SA in the form of migrant labour. 42% of economically viable workers (aged 18-45) of Lesotho work in South Africa, mostly in the mines. A large number of these are members of the NUM (we do not have actual figures, only an opinion based on talking to miners coming home for holidays).

Thus a workers' struggle in SA under the banner of ANC will bring into it a lot of Basotho working class, and cement the realisation that the struggle for the liberation of the SA working class is the struggle for the liberation of Basotho people from massacres and the independence of their country.

THE PHILIPPINES— The Marcos dictatorship falls



Occupation of the Presidential palace after Marcos fled.

The twenty-year dictatorship of President Marcos of the Philippines is over. Hated by workers and peasants, he was in the end deserted by crucial sections of the army, of the capitalist class, the church, Filipino diplomats abroad—and even by his staunchest protectors in Washington.

Repression, murder of his opponents and blatant vote rigging, were his stock in trade. He has now been whisked away by his American friends, to retire in the USA on his stolen wealth, estimated at from \$3-6 billion.

Having lost the election he had called, Marcos tried to cling to power. He was ousted by a revolutionary mobilisation of the Filipino masses. They took to the streets in their millions. They blockaded the barracks where the rebel troops were encamped, heroically defying Marcos' tanks with their bare hands.

The working class of Manila were no longer cowed. There were even reports of armed civilian groups. The rebellion in the army and reports of an armed forces reform movement claiming the allegiance of 70% of the officers, showed the potential to disarm capitalism.

However, without a clear socialist

alternative to Marcos, power remains with the old ruling class.

Cory Aquino, from one of the country's wealthiest families, has assumed the Presidency. Her government will be under enormous revolutionary pressures from the masses.

The situation in the Philippines has been giving the US bourgeoisie nightmares for some time. The islands are a key military and economic bastion of US imperialism in SE Asia.

52% of investment is controlled by US companies, and 50% of US investment in SE Asia is concentrated in the Philippines. The US pumps in more military aid than to any other Asian country (\$305 million in 1980-84).

An "archipelagic aircraft carrier" is the phrase *The Economist* used to sum up the strategic importance of the Philippines—where Clark Field and Subic Bay, the two US bases, are the largest overseas outposts of the US military.

The stakes are extremely high. Cam Ranh Bay, the Vietnamese base used by the US, is now used by Russian ships. If US imperialism were defeated in the Philippines, its main naval base, ship repair site and large

aircraft bases in Asia will disappear. It would have to retreat to Honolulu, half way back across the Pacific.

Marcos served US imperialism well from the time he was first elected in 1965. His imposition of martial law in September 1972 was part of a savage onslaught against the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants which had rocked the Philippines in the late sixties. Massacre, torture, murder, illegal arrest and rape became established as the normal way of dealing with any movement of the workers or peasants against exploitation. The right to strike and picket was effectively banned. Meanwhile the profits flowed.

Less than one per cent of the population controls 70 per cent of the economy. 349 companies are owned by Marcos himself. Vast profits are raked in by US companies. In mining and extracting for example, where there are virtually no environmental restrictions, ancient tribal lands can be freely devastated, there is an annual 20 per cent return on assets invested.

After two decades of growth, the domestic economy is in crisis, along with the world crisis of capitalism. The billions creamed out of the country add to the decline. There was a 4.6% decline in production, in real terms, last year. The foreign debt stands at \$26 billion. Inflation is 23 per cent. Some 24 per cent of the budget goes on servicing the foreign debt.

Seventy per cent of the population of 54.7 million live below the poverty line. 43% of the labour force are



Ex-President Marcos helped off his plane at the 'sanctuary' of a Hawaii US airbase.



Cory Aquino shakes hands with General Ramos: a regime of the old ruling class with a new popular figurehead.

either unemployed, semi-employed or not seeking work. In Manila alone there are 16 000 child prostitutes between the ages of 9 and 16. There are 3 million landless workers in the countryside. 70 per cent of Filipinos suffer from malnutrition. Half of all deaths of under fives are due to malnutrition.

Lack of services

There is a pitiful lack of social services, welfare and health provisions. 53% of the rural population do not have safe drinking water. 86% of urban families live in congested slums.

There is a daily minimum wage of £2.21 but the Marcos government allowed employers exemption even from this. Workers are subjected to forced overtime and very short rest periods. Women shop workers, for example, are allowed three minutes to go to the toilet, they are sacked if they get married, they are the target of sexual harassment by managers.

Under Marcos there was an horrific increase in the number of factory accidents. 86 per cent of companies do not comply with existing safety standards.

Despite a decade of ruthless and savage oppression, the very calling of the election was a symptom of the defensive position that the Marcos regime had been thrown into. Over the last few years there has been a massive wave of strikes under condi-

tions of illegality and terror.

The employers have been forced to grit their teeth and give concessions. There were 400 strikes (according to official figures) last year, a 45% increase on the previous year. 2.44 million working days were lost. In the face of repression, workers responded by greater militancy and greater mobilisation. There was a 355% increase in strike duration in 1985 compared to 1984 which indicates the emboldening of the working class and a hardening of the struggle.

There has been a combination of a strike movement with riots and popular demonstrations in the towns and a struggle of the peasants in the highlands. The unemployed, the slum dwellers and all oppressed sections of society are coming into struggle and seeking political ideas.

In the countryside, the guerilla movement based on the peasantry has scored victory after victory, throwing back the demoralised state forces despite their enormous US backing. There are shades of Vietnam, troops with US equipment, US training, harassing the civilian population, strategic hamleting to try and isolate the guerillas—yet still the guerillas go from strength to strength.

It was this relentless pressure from the downtrodden and exploited people rising to their feet and taking up weapons which terrified Marcos' US masters.

Last year US imperialism persuaded him to call an election in a desperate bid to shore up his almost

totally ruined credibility—hoping to capitalise on divisions among the forces opposed to Marcos. But their gamble backfired on them.

Cory Aquino is from a wealthy landowning family and is the widow of Nino Aquino, opposition leader assassinated as he stepped off a plane from the US in Manila in 1983. The Marcos regime made all efforts to cover up its guilt in this affair—but only succeeded in turning Cory Aquino into a popular figure around whom the opposition could unite.

During and after the election campaign, the Marcos forces used every trick to rig a victory—but the obvious win for the Aquino ticket placed US imperialism in a quandary.

Reagan wanted to bolster up his old ally Marcos for as long as he could get away with it. Days after the election his view at a news conference was that the “paramount importance” of the US bases would be a reason for accepting a Marcos victory, “however engineered”, (in the words of the *Financial Times*, 15/2/86).

This cut through all the hypocritical verbiage that surrounds US foreign policy statements and got down to the nitty gritty—if US vital interests are threatened then democracy goes out the window.

More far-sighted

But the more far-sighted representatives of US imperialism understood that it was better to install Aquino in office now, rather than let the opposition to Marcos build up an explosive force over a period of months or years, which would result in his replacement by a more left wing party, with the danger that the revolution would threaten landlordism and capitalism.

Pressure on Reagan mounted for the US to remove Marcos. When Marcos hesitated to stand down, the US backed the ex-Marcos men Defence Secretary Enrile and acting chief of staff Ramos. Mirroring the splits amongst the US bourgeois, there are many warring factions in the Filipino ruling class. Enrile and Ramos represented a section of the military who knew the game was up and wanted to provide themselves with democratic credentials.

The downfall of Marcos is a historic turning-point, opening up a new chapter in the tremendous history of struggle by the Filipino workers and peasants. It marks a new beginning of the Philippines revolution.

Enrile had boasted earlier that in his home province, he had delivered Marcos with his biggest margin of victory. Now, feeling the pressure of the masses, he and Ramos established a “rebel headquarters” and told Marcos to go.

The people of Manila erupted into the streets, and to the defence of the revolt. With the same obstinacy as Pinochet, closeting himself from the realities of the situation, Marcos at first hoped to ride out the storm of protest for a few weeks then revitalise the terror brigades and attempt to crack down.

But, as the press reported, the Pentagon was terrified that the Filipino army might crumble to pieces and warned commanders that if they obeyed orders to shoot demonstrators, they would forfeit any chance of finding refuge in the United States.

The test of this came when Marcos deployed helicopter gunships to attack Manila crowds: instead they defected to the rebels, and shot up Marcos’ grounded planes.

Marcos had to flee in ignominy—pausing only to pack as much as possible of his stolen wealth remaining in the country.

Amazingly, the so-called ‘socialist’ bureaucracy of the Soviet Union had been the only government to recognise the rigged election of Marcos and congratulated him on his victory! Now it sourly accused the US imperialists of interfering to bring him down.

Movement of workers

Despite the manoeuvres of the US, the movement of the workers in the towns was in the end what removed Marcos. This reaffirms the basic ideas of Marxism that the working class is the decisive force in the revolution even in the colonial world. It refutes those who argue for the guerilla struggle as the key to remov-

ing dictators.

The Aquino government is bourgeois to the core and packed with men of the old regime. General Ramos was responsible for butchering twenty workers on a picket line last year. Her Finance Minister is the multi-millionaire owner of a mining company. Enrile was an architect of Marcos’ period of martial law, and has amassed a fortune.

Penniless

Cory Aquino herself employs 2 300 farm-workers, whose wages vary from £1.52 a day to £1.58 a day (below the legal minimum)—and who are laid off penniless for half the year.

The new government will not solve the economic or social crisis and cannot meet the demands of the masses. Representing landlords and capitalists, it cannot give the land to the peasants—and hence the guerilla war will continue. It has declared that there will not even be discussion of the US bases question until 1991.

But, with the enormous pressures of the workers and peasants on it, the Aquino government will be riven with splits and disagreements. Her reputation as Nino’s widow can hold the movement back only temporarily.

The masses have felt their own strength and tasted success. What kind of ‘normality’ can return to the Philippines? New storms and social upheavals are inevitable.

The downfall of Marcos is a historical turning-point, opening up a new chapter in the tremendous history of struggle by the Filipino workers and peasants. It marks a new beginning of the Philippines revolution.

British Labour Party's

SOCIALIST RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA

Without a doubt, South Africa and the magnificent resistance of the youth and workers to apartheid and capitalism was the major international issue of the Labour Party conference in October.

Unfortunately, the conference was marred by Neil Kinnock's outburst attacking the British miners and the Liverpool Council's struggle against the Thatcher government. But despite the sharp right turn by the leadership, delegates were eager to lay down policies to arm the labour movement against attacks by the capitalists.

The debate on South Africa itself helped to sharpen the dividing line between the token gestures of the leadership on all issues and the rank and file membership. Conference gave overwhelming support to calls for direct links with SA workers and youth, and to the struggle to overthrow apartheid and capitalism.

The solidarity of delegates with the South African freedom struggle was shown in a standing ovation to Oliver Tambo of the ANC. Enthusiasm for taking action was shown in the cheers for the Southampton dockers who refused to handle South African military equipment.

Tide

The right-wing leadership hoped to ride this tide with gestures. A miner's lamp was given by the right-wing chairman of conference to comrade Oliver Tambo as a symbol of the enormous contribution made by miners to the workers' movement in both countries.

Delegates found this ironic coming from a leadership which had just fiercely attacked the miners' leaders for their resolute tactics in the strike!

Although the Labour Party leader-



Comrade Tambo on the platform at the 1985 Labour Party Conference, with National Executive members Frances Curran, representative of the Labour Party Young Socialists, and Eric Heffer, Liverpool M.P.

ship readily backs the anti-apartheid struggle in words, when in power Labour governments have hardly been different from the Tories in their dealings with the Pretoria regime.

The past Wilson and Callaghan governments determinedly opposed sanctions and supported increased investment and trade. It was a matter of business as usual with the apartheid regime.

The prospect of the Labour Party coming to power once again makes the right wing leaders wary of specific commitments on South Africa. When they were confronted with an uncompromising resolution stating the link between apartheid and capitalism, they put forward a vague NEC statement as an 'alternative'.

This avoided promising any effective action against apartheid. Denis Healey, the shadow foreign affairs spokesman, argued: "It is important that if we are to have honest and fruitful relations with the ANC that we do not make promises which can-

by Linda Douglas
member of National Committee
of the Labour Party Young
Socialists, and of the
London LP Executive

not be carried out."

In statements such as these the right-wing is really saying that a future Labour government will be guided as in the past by the interests of British and South African capitalism.

The socialist resolution called not only for the British labour movement to form direct links with SA workers and youth. It also outlined the class nature of the struggle for national liberation and the need for a socialist revolution to achieve the emancipation of the black oppressed.

It supported the ANC as "the political organisation which the oppressed masses want to build in the country under the control of the

organised working class, to carry through the struggle for national liberation, democracy, non-racialism, and socialism."

These were ideas which overwhelmingly the delegates support. An odd mixture of speakers tried to oppose the resolution: a delegate influenced by SACTU's hostility to direct links; an advocate of separate black sections in the Labour Party; and the right-wing NEC itself.

Frighten

John Jones of TASS (the white collar engineering union) said the resolution would frighten away the "religious groups, and progressive whites" in South Africa from the fight against apartheid. He opposed its standpoint of workers' control.

When he criticised it as the "simplistic line of revolution" from "some small grouping or tendency", there were groans from the delegates. Conference had had enough of anti-*Militant* rhetoric as a substitute for political argument.

John Jones had no more success when he argued that Oliver Tambo (who was on the platform throughout the debate) should not be burdened with having to fight for socialism as well as national liberation, and that the resolution was wrong in wanting to subject the ANC to working-class control!

Sharon Atkins, national chairperson of the black sections campaign, opposed support for a struggle for socialism. South Africa, apparently, is a largely peasant country where the blacks want 'land and freedom' and are not concerned about fighting for socialism.

The best received speech, on the other hand, was by Peter Heathfield of the NUM. In a change of attitude, he came out strongly in support of direct links with South African workers.

He also called for an end to all investment in South Africa by pension funds on which trade unions are represented, even if this meant breaking the law that maximum profits should be the only criteria for investment.

The platform, which had undemocratically selected a majority of speakers against the resolution,



Linda Douglas speaks at the 1985 London region Labour Party conference.

insisted that there should be a card vote. They thought they could defeat the resolution by the block votes wielded by right-wing trade union leaders.

What they did not know was that numerous discussions had taken place within the union delegations to ensure their leadership would vote for socialist demands and strong action against apartheid.

The NUM, Transport and General, General and Municipal, Railworkers, SOGAT, and National Communications Union, all gave their support.

The platform was surprised to discover they had been badly defeated. The resolution passed—by 3 516 000 votes in favour to 2 699 000 against.

After the debate a liberal South African journalist, Denis Herbstein, wrote that abolition of capitalism talked of by the resolution "is not Labour Party language, nor, for that matter, is it the ANC's." (*West Africa* magazine, 14/10/85)

This language is, however, the language of the rank and file and Marxists in both the Labour Party and the ANC!

It is clear that the right-wing Labour Party leadership will try to have the policy adopted in 1985 reversed at the next party conference.

But in preparation for that, in the Constituency Labour Parties resolutions are already being adopted which reaffirm the commitment to a revolutionary struggle against apartheid and capitalism, and which support armed self-defence of the movement as well as preparations for a future armed insurrection to overthrow the apartheid regime.



DEFEND LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL!

With huge support from working people, the Labour City Council in Liverpool—guided by the Marxist leadership of supporters of the *Militant* newspaper—last year waged a magnificent fight to defend jobs, homes, and services, against Tory government cuts, without any unreasonable increase in rates.

This meant declaring a budget 'illegal' under Tory laws.

A hysterical campaign was mounted by Tory ministers and their millionaire-run press against Liverpool City Council, comparable with that launched against the miners on strike in 1983-4. After a long fight, the Council was forced to retreat on November 22. The statement reprinted here was issued by the *Militant* Editorial Board following this decision. It describes the struggle, and the reasons why temporary retreat was necessary.

At the root of the problem was the role of the national Labour leadership and their local supporters—assisted by the small British "Communist" Party.

Far from supporting the Council's courageous stand, they went out of their way to attack and discredit them, echoing the distortions and falsifications of the Tory press.

Even Tory M.P.'s admitted privately that the Council would have forced the government to back down and concede money (as it had done in 1984), had it not been for the divisive role of the Labour leadership.

The alternative for the Tories would have been to establish "direct rule" over the City, and even bring in troops against workers' refusal to cooperate. It was a great relief to Thatcher that the Labour leadership did her "dirty work" for her.

Keen to replace the Tories in government, the right-wing Labour leaders—and even many so-called 'lefts'—are at the same time overwhelmed by the scale of the crisis of British capitalism and the resulting polarisation of the classes. They have held off from committing themselves to a definite programme of reforms in government—and are terrified by the example of a fighting socialist leadership that has been set in Liverpool.

Since the statement was produced, the Labour leadership has gone even further. On November 27 the right-wing dominated NEC suspended the activities of Liverpool District Labour Party and set up an "enquiry" into its activities.

Taking evidence in secret, the enquiry has now produced a report. Despite a Tory press barrage with all manner of wild allegations of "corruption", "nepotism", "mismanage-

ment" and "intimidation" in the affairs of the Liverpool DLP, this enquiry produces not a shred of concrete evidence to support such charges.

Nevertheless, it recommends the "reorganisation" of the Liverpool DLP by appointed officials, and the expulsion of up to 16 leading Labour activists from the Party—on the grounds that they are supporters of *Militant*. Among them are Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader of the Council, and Tony Mulhearn, Chairman of the District Party.

Quite wrongly, the right-wing Labour leadership argue that *Militant*'s increasing influence in the Labour Party represents an "electoral liability." But it is the Tories and their press who are the most vehement in their calls for the purging of *Militant* from the Labour Party. Why should they have any interest in improving Labour's electoral prospects?

The ruling class and those who support them are terrified of the growth of Marxism in Britain. They know that it reflects the desire of increasing numbers of working people—faced with mass unemployment, declining

welfare services, and a hopeless future on the basis of capitalism—for a transformation of society.

Expulsions or not, the ideas of Marxism will not be driven from the Labour Party, but will go from strength to strength.

In the struggle to build the Labour Party on a socialist programme in Liverpool and around the country; in the struggle to bring in a Labour government committed to ending capitalism, Liverpool City Council and its supporters deserve the active solidarity of the workers' movement in South Africa and internationally.

STOP PRESS: On March 5 three High Court judges ruled that 80 Labour councillors from Liverpool and Lambeth should be "surcharged" (personally fined) an amount of £200 000, and prohibited from holding public office for five years, for setting 'illegal' budgets last year.

Messages of protest at this vicious Tory vengeance, and support for the councillors, should be sent to the Councils and to the Labour Party NEC.

Liverpool Council fights on

The scenes outside the Liverpool District Labour Party meeting on Friday 22 November were more akin to a victory rally than the 'climbdown' or 'cave in' or 'surrender' described by the Tory press.

This was the biggest meeting in the history of the DLP, with 700 delegates and members inside and a further 200 outside the meeting.

The District Labour Party voted by 694 to 12 in favour of adopting a recommendation by the Executive for the Council to implement a financial package to balance the City Councils' books.

This followed a meeting earlier in the day of the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee which voted by 250 to 30 to support the Councils' proposals. The local authority trade unions and the labour movement of Merseyside recognised, by this decision, that they had to accept an orderly retreat given the monstrous campaign that had been waged against them.

This represents an endorsement of the Labour Councils' decision to balance the books by adopting a package based on capitalisation and new loans in order to make up for the cash which the Tory government stole from the City and failed to make available in this financial year.

The Labour movement is used to lies and distortion from the Capitalist press. But this has reached new depths in relation to Liverpool, with a barrage of lies, distortion, and personal vilification against the Council in general and *Militant* supporters in particular. This was being combined with enough lies to construct a new Tower of Babel as to the real implications of the Stonefrost report. This recipe of drastic cuts was misrepresented as an "easy" or "painless" solution to Liverpool's crisis.

Leon Trotsky described the "cold cruelty" of the British ruling class in its ruthless oppression of the colonial peoples. Today they have shown the same callous indifference towards the people of Liverpool.

The Tories were prepared to punish a population of half a million people, by locking out 30 000 council workers, by imposing housing cuts, and by depriving the old, the sick and young children of council care.

At the Tory Party conference, Baker, the Minister supposedly responsible for the Environment, cynically announced that he and his government were going to sit back while "Liverpool twisted in the wind". The capitalist class and the Tories



hate the labour movement of Merseyside for the marvellous gains they have achieved through struggle.

Liverpool has built more houses than all other local authorities put together. The council has improved education through its reorganisation scheme, maintaining teachers the government said should be sacked, and re-adopting Croxteth Comprehensive School. There are 4 000 workers with jobs in Liverpool today who would be on the dole but for the measures of the Council. There are a hundred YTS trainees, on full trade union rates of pay, who have been guaranteed a job at the end of their training period.

The struggle in Liverpool forced the Tories to make concessions last year. Since then the Tory government has been determined to take revenge on workers of the city. Fearing that the contagion would spread to workers in other cities, the Tories were determined to snuff out the Liverpool "virus".

The Tories saw that Liverpool's success last year resulted in 20 Labour councils defying the government at the beginning of this year in refusing to set a rate. There is no doubt that if these 20 councils had stood together in a united front then the Tories would have been forced to back

down. Unfortunately, with the first whiff of grape shot all these councils, with the exception of Liverpool and Lambeth, ran for cover.

In spite of this, Liverpool could still have achieved a victory again this year—if the resources of the Labour and trade union movement had been swung behind their fight. Instead of supporting this magnificent struggle, however, the trade union leaders have twisted the Tory knife in Liverpool's back.

"Painless"

The general secretaries presented the Stonefrost report as a "painless" solution to Liverpool's problems. In reality, Stonefrost regurgitated all the "unacceptable" measures already rejected by the city council and local authority unions dressed up as "acceptable" options. In reality it would have meant a 15% rate rise (an extra £5 a week for every household until next March) and a big element of capitalisation (meaning cuts in the housing programme and sackings for private sector building workers.)

Four different options, all including a 15% rate increase and higher charges for council services, were all ruled out as equally unacceptable;

(1) £12 million capitalisation, plus £4.50 rent rise.

(2) £3.21 rent rise and 2 400 sackings.

(3) £4.88 rent rise, a freezing of recruitment, and 3 700 sackings.

(4) £6.50 rent rise, frozen recruitment, and 5 000 sackings.

Cuts

The package now adopted by the council has nothing in common with the vicious package of cuts contained in Stonefrost. Is it any accident that Stonefrost was praised by Baker, Biffen, by David Alton and the Liberals? Since when have these enemies of the working class been in favour of "painless" solutions for workers?

The role played by the trade union and labour leaders in relation to Liverpool is unfortunately no different from the shameful role which they played in undermining the struggle of the miners, of refusing to back the NGA, in withholding all-out backing for the struggle of GCHQ workers for trade union rights, and for abandoning the printing workers battling at the Financial Times.

Regrettably, Neil Kinnock sat on the fence during the miners' strike. In the case of Liverpool's struggle, he has gone over to the side of the enemy. Not only did Labour's front bench scream for the immediate implementation of Stonefrost, they indicated publicly that they would support the sending in of Commissioners by the Tory government and the use of troops against the workers of Liverpool. The Tories could not have contemplated sending in Commissioners or troops without the open approval of the Labour leaders. This has produced a wave of revulsion within the labour movement. It brings back memories of the Callaghan government using troops against the firemen in 1977.

This will raise a question mark in the minds of many workers about the role of a Labour government with Neil Kinnock at its head. Does it mean that the next Labour government would be prepared to use troops against workers in struggle?

Perhaps the worst example of the refusal to support Liverpool came from the general secretaries of the trade unions. The leaders of the NUT should hang their heads in shame for using the Capitalist courts against Liverpool.

The NUT's action gave three High Court judges the opportunity to repeatedly denounce the City Council's policy as

"irresponsible" and "irrational". Is it "irrational" to preserve the jobs of four hundred teachers against the recommendation of Keith Joseph and against the criticism of the National Audit Commission which considers them "surplus to requirements"?

Some of those who stand on the left of the Labour Party, however, cannot be proud of their role either. They have clamoured for the implementation of Stonefrost. First of all the leaders of councils like the GLC, Islington, and Sheffield, all threw in the towel before they had engaged in battle. The marvellous struggle of Liverpool is a standing indictment of their incapacity to fight the Tory government.

If Liverpool had been completely successful it would have raised questions about their role. This explains their ambivalence, and in some cases outright opposition, to Liverpool's stand. The right wing have leaned on some of these lefts to try and bring pressure on Liverpool to capitulate. In a letter to the Parliamentary Party, John Cunningham and Jack Straw quote David Blunkett, approving his characterisation of Liverpool's stand as "insane" and also "an act of sabotage of the labour movement."

At the meeting of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) on

Thursday 20th November, Margaret Hodge, leader of Islington council, had the temerity to attack Liverpool's tactics as "discrediting the left". It is the action of leaders like Margaret Hodge earlier this year that will discredit the left in the eyes of workers who are looking for an effective struggle against the Tories.

In the aftermath of the Liverpool struggle, the capitalist press is attempting to give credit to David Blunkett. The package which has been agreed by Liverpool, in reality, has nothing in common with Blunkett's "less than painful route through Stonefrost."

Truth

Militant believes in telling the working class the truth no matter how unpalatable. The package which has been agreed undoubtedly represents a setback. The main elements of the package are a form of capitalisation, which is made possible by £30 million loans from Swiss banks. This means that parts of the housebuilding and house repair programme will be carried out on a deferred payments scheme (the municipal equivalent of hire purchase) financed by the banks, while the original capital funds from government grants will

be used for current expenditure. This will allow the house building programme for the next financial year to be completed, and probably for the following year as well, though it will result in cuts in housing after that unless more funds can be won.

The package also incorporates the use of the feeble helping hand of £3 million transferred borrowing capacity from other local authorities arranged through the AMA. It will also mean £3 million of "unallocated" cuts, which will probably mean some unfilled vacancies and other cutbacks. There will be no job losses this year.

This package represents cuts—but far less than Stonefrost and the measures that the Tories, the Liberals, and unfortunately the Labour leaders were expecting to be implemented.

Liverpool's enemies are now claiming that this option was "there all the time" and jeeringly asking "why wasn't this implemented before?" They are maliciously alleging that it was only "Trotskyist lies and scare-mongering" that prevented a settlement on these proposals long ago.

This is entirely false. No Marxist would deliberately court confrontation and conceal an available solution that would avoid suffering and deprivation for working people—if it were available. But this



New housing built by Liverpool's Labour Party-controlled City Council. With Marxist leadership the Council has built more new houses than all other local authorities in the country put together—despite the vicious Tory attacks.

new package has only become available because of partial concessions by big business because of the magnificent struggle of the Liverpool labour movement.

The £30 million loan from the banks was not available before. The settlement arose from the fear of big firms in Liverpool at the consequences of a mass lay-off, and these local firms in turn put pressure on the banks to come up with the loans. Moreover, while denying it vehemently in public, in all probability Baker approved the deal behind the scenes. In spite of their brave words, nobody should imagine that the Tories have been unaffected by the struggle put up by the Liverpool workers.

Marxists have always argued that reforms are a by-product of militant and socialist struggle. In this case, the marvellous struggle has mitigated the effects of the cuts demanded by big business and the Tories.

Perhaps there is a lesson here for Roy Hattersley, new guru of the Fabian Society. The international banks are only influenced by struggle, not by humble supplications!

What are the consequences of this package? It is much less drastic than Stonefrost. There are no rate or rent increases. There will be no sackings this year. Nevertheless, it is still based on capitalisation of housing expenditure which is a policy that Militant and the City Council were previously opposed to. We repeat, that unless the money is made up in some other way, it will mean future cuts in the house building and repair programme.

Armed with the real facts about the Stonefrost report the majority of workers would have rejected it as a way out and voted to support the policy of the shop stewards for action.

Colossal support

This was demonstrated by the overwhelming rejection of Stonefrost by Branch No. 5 of the GMBATU and others and their colossal support for the continuation of the action. The open democratic discussion in the GMBATU is in marked contrast to what happened in many of the other unions. In the Transport and General Workers, for example, full time officials put an entirely one-sided version of the Stonefrost report, giving the illusion that it represented a painless way out. On the other hand, councillors, including TGWU councillors, were not allowed to attend the meeting let alone put the case of the council.

Right to the end, between 1 000 and

2 000 GMBATU workers remained firm in their rejection of Stonefrost and committed to taking industrial action. Among these were decisive sections, such as the council security force.

Could this minority, by taking action, have drawn behind them a majority of the workforce? This was ruled out by the enormous weight of propaganda and misinformation about the Stonefrost report. Even amongst this resolute section, the salt of the earth, in the last few days before the package was accepted their support for action began to be undermined by the barrage of attacks. It would have been impossible for a thousand workers to organise effective action in the teeth of all opposition and given the reluctance of the majority of the 30 000 council workers to come out.

Vultures

It would have been impossible, for instance, to implement the joint shop stewards' plans for covering emergency services during the action. There is also evidence to show that some of the right-wing trade union officials were actually attempting to sabotage the plans for emergency cover. The vultures of Fleet Street were waiting to use this sabotage and pounce on any cases of hardship to exploit the situation against the Council.

Unallocated cuts could mean job losses in the future. The council will not forget the workers, like the magnificent workers in the GMBATU and other manual workers, who backed the struggle to the end and who should be the last to suffer from any consequences of this compromise. We also salute those rank and file members of other unions, NALGO, the NUT and NUPE, who opposed their own leaders' shameful role and were themselves prepared to back the struggle.

Acceptance of capitalisation and unallocated cuts undoubtedly represents a retreat from the policy advocated by Militant. The question has therefore been raised by some workers: shouldn't the Labour Councillors therefore resign and let the Liberals and Tories do Thatcher's dirty work?

The question that should be asked is: would such a step further either the short term or long term interests of the Liverpool labour movement and the council workforce? The Liberals and Tories would not resign to fight a General election. Pending bye-elections, therefore, the Liberals and Tories would take control and introduce savage cuts which would be "Stonefrost plus". They would also purge the council workforce of the trade

union militants as they have threatened to do many times. The shop stewards and the District Labour Party insisted, quite correctly under the circumstances, that the Labour councillors should stay in office.

Right-wing

Labour right-wingers and some on the left as well will now jeer that the Liverpool councillors have stepped into the same boat as themselves, and will now be presiding over cuts. The sects on the fringes of the labour movement will now intone in chorus about a "Militant sell-out in Liverpool". Victory or setback, however, they hurl the same charges. Last year, in spite of winning concessions from the Tory government, they said it was "sold down the Mersey".

In order to cover the retreat of the Labour leadership Neil Kinnock has used the false analogy of the "dented shield". At least the knights of old went into battle before they got their shields dented. Most of the councils Kinnock is defending retreated before they engaged in battle. Just compare the attitude in the councils which retreated to the attitude of workers in Liverpool. We saw on the television scenes where workers occupied council chambers up and down the country to prevent their own Labour councils implementing budgets based on cuts. These workers were appalled at councillors who promised to fight, but backed down at the first serious test.

In Liverpool, in contrast, there is a widespread understanding that the Labour councillors have led a titanic struggle. Under threat from the District Auditor they have put their jobs, their houses, and their future livelihood on the line and that threat still hangs over their heads now. In what other council's area has support for Labour leapt from 45% at last year's elections to 55% in recent opinion polls? What other District Labour Party could boast of the attendance of over 900 at their aggregate meetings? It has always been alleged that Militant "bores people away from meetings". Our right wing critics are strangely silent at the moment!

The high level of involvement of workers in Labour Party and trade union meetings, and the raising of the political consciousness of wide layers of workers, is a marvellous feature of the struggle in Liverpool. Without a doubt, it is the most politicised city in Britain.

The very tenacity of the struggle in Liverpool, with the policies and message of the council being carried to the factories, the housing estates, to every area

of the city, has prepared the workers of Liverpool for a continuation of the struggle to gain more resources and prevent draconian cuts. In the light of this, it is incredible that Neil Kinnock is reportedly criticising the new package. He has criticised the package on the basis that it does not include a rate increase and that it will mean cuts in the housing programme. This is when other councils, including left councils, have carried massive rate increases but have hardly built any houses either! Neil must be very careful or he will end up in the same bed as our sectarian critics on the fringes of the labour movement!

Kinnock was advocating a 15 per cent rate increase, the equivalent of £5 a week for every household in Liverpool. His indignation has very little to do with concern about the housing programme, but everything to do with the City council's refusal to accept the diktat of the Labour front bench and the trade union general secretaries.

The Tories and their shadows in the labour movement were determined to use Liverpool, as they did with the miners, to show that "militancy does not pay". On the contrary, what Liverpool has brilliantly confirmed is that under capitalism you don't get anything without a fight, and you don't get a fight without a leadership guided by Marxism.

Liverpool is a shining example to workers everywhere. The battle has been followed by workers throughout the world, following events even through distorted reports in the press and the overseas service of the BBC. In strategy, tactics and organisation, it is a model to workers everywhere who want to see a victory over capitalism.

Implacable

The whole labour movement must salute the 49 Labour councillors, who have remained implacable and unwavering to the end. The role of Militant supporters in the council workforce has been absolutely decisive. Where Militant supporters have been strongest, there have been the most determined sections of the workforce. Just a few days before the agreement to adopt the new package, workers in the number 5 branch of the GMBATU voted by 100 to 3 for action in support of the council. Where there was confusion and hesitation it was because there was no farsighted Marxist leadership.

The most pernicious tactics of deliberate confusion, dust blowing and outright lies, came from local supporters of the rapidly dwindling and misnamed

"Communist" Party. They have acted scandalously as a mouthpiece for right-wing Labour, and even Tory leaders. If they had consciously set out to sabotage the struggle they could hardly have done better. Fortunately their influence has been marginalised. They have been totally discredited in the eyes of conscious working class fighters, and will play no significant part in future struggles on Merseyside.

Lessons

One of the main lessons of the struggle is that in order to defeat the capitalist and Tory enemy the organisations of the working class must be transformed. Only leaders inspired by the ideas and fighting capacity of Marxism can guarantee victory. The lesson drawn by the class conscious workers is that if they are to avoid future defeats their organisations, like NALGO, NUPE, NUT and other unions, must be transformed from top to bottom. The members of these unions need resolute leaders who can measure up to the demands of struggle against the bosses.

Local NUPE leader Jane Kennedy has attacked the Council in the media for its promise "to continue to campaign next year". Is she saying that council workers should meekly accept cuts? If she is not prepared to fight we are sure that NUPE members will elect leaders who are.

How will the struggle develop now? The acceptance of a balanced budget is far from being the last chapter. Liverpool's struggle goes on. In January the councillors will be up before the High Court to answer the District Auditor's surcharge, imposed on the councillors personally for the "crime" of fighting for the interests of workers. If there is any attempt by the Court to surcharge the councillors, bankrupt them, or bar them from public office, this must be answered by a resolute industrial action by the whole council workforce with the backing of the wider labour movement.

Next April, when the council has to set the next year's budget, Liverpool will be faced with a further cut of at least £30m. The Tory government intends to cut another £1.3 billion from the block grants to local authorities putting "all councils in Liverpool's position", David Blunkett said recently. This will mean a further massive battle to avoid even bigger cuts.

As the example of Liverpool's gains last year and the present struggle shows, whatever limited gains the workers make under capitalism they will inevitably be forced to struggle again and again to defend the gains of the past. That is why

Militant has always linked struggles like the struggle in Liverpool to the need for the socialist transformation of society. We stand for the return of a Labour government committed to a 35-hour week, a £115 a week minimum wage, a massive programme of public works, recognising that this can only be carried through on the basis of the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, the big banks and finance houses, and a socialist plan of production.

The battle in Liverpool and Militant's campaign for a socialist policy within the labour movement has earned us the venomous condemnation of the capitalists. They have exerted remorseless pressure on the Labour leaders to carry out a purge of socialists from the Labour Party, beginning with Militant, and then going on to purge Tony Benn, the Campaign Group, and other left-wingers. This is the first step towards eliminating all the gains achieved in recent Party Conferences on Party democracy and radical policies.

Threats

Disgracefully, Jack Straw and even Neil Kinnock have hinted at the expulsion of Derek Hatton, Tony Mulhearn, Tony Byrne and others from the Liverpool Labour Party. They have even threatened the disbandment of the Liverpool District Labour Party. This is the equivalent of trying to expel Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield from the NUM during the course of the miners' strike. It will meet with the furious resistance of the overwhelming majority not only of the Liverpool Labour Party but also of Labour's ranks generally. It would not be possible to expel Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn from the Labour Party without disbanding the Liverpool District Labour Party. Such an outrage would split the Labour Party from top to bottom throughout the country.

Militant would take the campaign against such a purge into every trade union branch, every ward party, and also onto the streets and into the estates. Any attempt to proceed along the road of a mass purge of socialists will meet with mass demonstrations of workers against the witch-hunters.

The leaders of the labour movement have a choice: they can have unity in the battle against the Tories or they can have a purge. They cannot have both.

The Liverpool fight goes on. The struggle for socialist policies within the Labour Party and trade unions goes on.

GREECE— An explosion of strikes and protests

The one-day strike on 14 November was a sign of Greece's biggest crisis since the Second World War, comparable to the student rising against the military dictatorship in 1974.

The capitalist parties, twice defeated by PASOK (the Greek Socialist Party), are demoralised, divided and see no way out of the

**by a correspondent
in Athens**

6 December 1985

crisis. Immediately following June's election defeat, the main capitalist party New Democracy split with nine of its newly elected MPs forming the 'Democratic Renovation'.

The capitalist class itself at present

is happily standing by and allowing PASOK to carry through a ruthless austerity programme. "If the conservatives had won and tried to apply the austerity there would have been wholesale revolt and they would have fallen. Only the Socialists can pull this off—that is why their responsibility is so great", a leading Greek conservative openly commented.

There were similar declarations in the bosses' press—editorial statements attacking their own New Democracy party for calling



Jubilation in the streets—including by police—at the first PASOK (Socialist Party) election victory in October 1981, which brought the workers' parties into office with an electoral majority of 60.3%. Now a re-elected PASOK government is carrying out a harsh austerity programme of cuts in workers' living standards in an attempt to solve the crisis of Greek capitalism.

demonstrations against the government. The one fear that the Greek bourgeois have expressed is that PASOK Prime Minister Papandreu may go too far in attacking the working class and, "... provoke a situation which may get out of control".

Such fears are more than justified. An explosion of strikes and demonstrations greeted the programme of Papandreu. Greece has been plunged, at least temporarily, into a pre-revolutionary crisis: all sections of society are searching for a solution. A massive politicisation has taken place with furious discussions on buses, in restaurants and groups gathering on the streets.

In June PASOK was returned to power for the second time with 46 per cent of the vote. Together with the Greek Communist Party, KKE, a clear majority gave their support to a socialist transformation of Greek society, reflected in the PASOK slogan: "for the change".

However, rather than carry through such a transformation, Papandreu and the PASOK leadership, under the pressure of capitalism, have adopted a ruthless programme of counter-reform. Public expenditure is being cut, wages frozen for two years and the Drachma devalued by 15 per cent, pushing up prices. The measures have shattered the hopes of Greek workers, and brought them into open conflict with the PASOK government.

Strike action

Metal workers, civil servants, dockers, taxi drivers and teachers have all been involved in strike action. Reflecting the radicalisation of the middle class, lawyers have been on strike for more than 51 days! Even workers employed at the US NATO base have been in action over wages.

Athens has had two 24-hour strikes in three weeks, one at city and the second at national level. During the days preceding the second strike, students at one college organised an occupation and even established a radio station.

The national general strike on 14 November got the support of over 80 per cent of workers. It was called by both CP- and PASOK-led trade

unions. In Athens between 150 000 and 200 000 demonstrated, throughout Greece marches and meetings were organised. Over one and half million workers were on strike, making it the biggest since the Second World War.

During such a movement the working class feels its strength as a class and draws behind its banner large sections of the middle class. Small shops in Athens were closed and the banners of the doctors could be clearly seen on the Athens demonstration.

Greek workers' strength was clearly reflected in two incidents. After a small clash between strikers and some scabs, police arrested the strike leaders at a public service depot. Over 5 000 workers immediately marched to the court whereupon the police chief released the arrested workers.

In another incident, a policeman drew his gun; he made a big mistake. Straight away he was disarmed by the workers and taken inside a factory where he was "firmly" shown that such actions during such a movement are not welcomed.

Confrontation

So the PASOK government finds itself locked in confrontation with its own workers and winning the backing of the very people (the capitalists) whom it was elected to attack. The reforms promised by PASOK cannot be implemented **within** the decaying and crisis-ridden capitalist economy of Greece. A break with the rule of the monopolies and a socialist plan of production are essential to implement and maintain such reforms.

The bosses are unable to use more than 70 per cent of industrial capacity, so unemployment has soared to over 350 000. A massive foreign debt is bleeding the country in almost Latin American proportions. Between 1978 and 1984 the foreign debt trebled to US\$12,3 billion; one estimate is as high as US\$18 billion. For the past 10 years, 75 per cent of annual borrowing has been taken up with foreign debt.

In such a crisis, any Socialist government serious about carrying through its programme would have to break the power of the 200 monopolies which control 70 per cent of the economy—the alternative is to act

in their interests by implementing the programme of austerity against the working people.

Failure to carry through such a socialist plan will disillusion many of its supporters and could result in the defeat of PASOK at the next election, and bring into power another government of the right. Such a government would rapidly come into collision with the working class, paving the way for the return of another PASOK government.

Swing to left

The bourgeois themselves fear these developments, especially the massive swing to the left in PASOK which is starting now and will grow. **As if to prepare for such a development their one demand on Papandreu is that he must "deal with the left of the party or we will face them in power in the future".**

But the capitalist class will not be able to return to the methods of military-police dictatorship **in the short term**. The strength of the working class and its organisations together with the weakness of the capitalist class prevents it.

The current crisis has had an enormous effect on the ranks of the conscript armed forces. At the demonstration in Athens a message of support was read from rank and file airmen and even some junior officers. PASOK and Communist Party members report that political discussions are being undertaken amongst the ranks of the services.

Any attempt at a coup would meet the fierce resistance of the working class and win the support of many of the ranks of the armed forces. It would result in a conflict which the bourgeois understand they would have no certainty of winning.

Should the working class fail to carry through the socialist revolution however, after a series of defeats and demoralisation, then in a period of five or possibly ten years such a coup *would eventually be posed*.

Faced with such a crisis, the Greek masses are searching for a programme which will ensure the carrying through of a socialist transformation of society. They are attempting to transform PASOK and their traditional organisations and equip them



Vital in PASOK's June election victory was Prime Minister Papandreou's last minute decision to withdraw support from the bourgeois President Karamanlis, then up for re-election. This decision was forced on him by the PASOK Central Committee, as the result of a campaign spearheaded by Xekinima, Marxist voice in PASOK. Here Xekinima supporters demonstrate outside a Central Committee meeting.

with such a programme.

Despite the hostility towards Papandreou's programme, workers are remaining with PASOK to fight for an alternative. It will be a process repeated again and again during the Greek revolution.

Most workers saw the recent strikes as a protest—an attempt to force Papandreou to change his programme and not to bring down the government. For the working class there is no practical alternative to a PASOK government.

Central task

The central task before the movement's activists is to build support for a clear Marxist alternative to the programme of the PASOK right wing; to draw the workers' organisations together, unify the struggle and offer a way forward on policy and strategy.

A minority of workers, in advance of the mass, have raised the idea of an indefinite general strike, a development which seems unlikely at present. But should it occur it would pose sharply the question of which class is to run society. To resolve such a question a Marxist programme and leadership is essential. The task now posed is to win support for such an alternative.

Organisations which can bring all

layers of the working class together are now essential, especially given the government's decision to use the laws of the ex-military regime to remove those union leaders who supported the calling of the general strike.

The establishment of Councils of Action, drawing delegates from the factories would help to launch a serious campaign of mobilisations, including the calling of further general strikes of limited duration to force the government to abandon its austerity measures and explain a socialist alternative to transform society.

By bringing all the various layers of the working class together they could unify the movement and take it on to the next stage of the struggle. Athens Trades Council with approximately 2 000 delegates is the most effective body for such a role. With the other trades councils throughout Greece, they should now constitute themselves as viable Councils of Action, organising similar bodies at area and district level to campaign at every factory and work place.

They should be thrown open to the representatives of the students, small shop keepers and middle class who are being severely affected by the crisis and looking to the workers' organisations for a solution.

Unfortunately the Greek Communist Party, which has a very powerful position amongst the trade unions, is failing to undertake such

a campaign. Rather than organising a struggle to unify the movement the leadership is separating the different groups of workers and calling different groups out on strike at different times.

With many workers looking for an alternative they have limited themselves to attacks against PASOK and vague calls for an extension of the public sector, coupled with a very hostile attitude towards the rank and file of PASOK.

Leadership

Due to the policy of the PASOK government, even these limitations of the Communist Party will not stop limited gains in the short term, and the party is expected to increase its position in the forthcoming union elections. However the stand adopted by the leadership has caused widespread dissent within the CP, especially amongst its worker members.

Under such conditions the ideas of Marxism are winning increased support as workers search out a clear alternative.

If it persists with its pro-capitalist programme of counter-reform, the PASOK government seems set to stumble from crisis to crisis. The enormous movement of the Greek workers at some stage will pause before once again moving on to the offensive. As the process of revolution unfolds, the forces of Marxism can be enormously strengthened to become the decisive force in Greece and resolve the crisis by the socialist transformation of society.

It is vital for Marxists within PASOK to avert the danger of left-wing rank-and-file members splitting away from the party in this period out of frustration at the right-wing policies of the present leadership. They must become instead a conscious force for the transformation of PASOK itself.

Enormous responsibility rests on the shoulders of the supporters of Xekinima, the voice of Marxists in PASOK, to win the battle of ideas among the rank and file of the party and the unions, and among workers and youth generally, and so prepare the way for the victory of the Greek revolution.

GHANA— revolution and counter-revolution

Workers throughout Africa have taken a keen interest in political developments in Ghana as the first African country to win independence from the colonial powers in 1957.

The rise of Nkrumah, as the leader of the radical nationalist party CPP (Convention Peoples' Party), to the position of Prime Minister in

1952 and his statements in favour of a continental struggle for liberation created great excitement.

All the greater then was the confusion when Nkrumah was ousted from power by a right-wing military coup in 1966—without the Ghanaian masses lifting a finger to save him.

In fact Nkrumah's regime

had become deeply unpopular among workers and peasants. This was not *because* of his radical policies, as the imperialists claimed. Rather it was because he attempted to carry out reforms on the basis of a very weak capitalist economy—and, while using the rhetoric of 'socialism', held the workers back from a decisive movement to over-



Ghanaian mineworkers.

throw capitalism.

His policies were essentially those followed today by Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

Thus reforms turned to counter-reforms, corruption and chaos. Some 'radical' policies which antagonised the big capitalists were combined with pleas for the multinationals to invest and attacks on the trade unions.

But, if Nkrumah's policies proved a failure, the out-and-out capitalist policies of the military establishment and bourgeois politicians subsequently have led the Ghanaian people to the point of economic ruin and starvation.

As the economy, which is almost entirely dependent on the export of cocoa, has decayed, the desperation of the workers and peasants has led the military to undertake coups and counter-coups. These have been futile attempts to end the rampant corruption at the top and to break out of the brutal effects of economic decline.

An oscillation of civilian and military governments, all on a capitalist basis, and all politically and economically bankrupt, has taken place.

In searching for a revolutionary way forward, many Ghanaians look back to the Nkrumah era as a golden age compared with the present horrors. A profusion of 'progressive organisations' have tried to resurrect the Nkrumah traditions and gain an echo among the working masses. Movements among radical junior army officers have typically begun under an 'Nkrumahist' banner.

The most recent coup on 31 December 1981 which brought Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings to power for a second time was intended to end the corruption and decline of the past.

Rawlings called for a 'real revolution' and on the working people to form defence committees to defend the 'revolution' and to 'take part in decision making'. For a time there were spectacular

developments with factory occupations, corruption exposed by workers, and the mansions of the elite confiscated.

However, this involvement of the masses in politics was soon to be condemned in October and November 1982 by the very man who had called on the masses to take action!

The genuine revolutionaries were arrested and the rank-and-file leaders of the soldiers who carried out the coup were purged by Rawlings. Far from bringing the workers to power and advancing to socialism, the government's economic policies are now the admiration of the IMF and the poverty of the ordinary people grows ever deeper.

All attempts to regenerate capitalism in Ghana have failed, despite following the IMF's instructions to the letter.

How did the Rawlings' regime which seemed to promise so much to working people come to retreat and then attack the very people who had helped to bring it to power? What lessons are there for those struggling for genuine socialism and workers' democracy?

SAM PARKIN interviewed NYEYA YEN, who played a leading role in the events of the revolution as a member of the National Defence Committee in Ghana, and is now a leading member of the United Revolutionary Front in exile.

What is the present situation in Ghana?

The people are desperately poor and becoming poorer. Instead of the Rawlings regime carrying out its promises of real democracy and workers' control, it has attacked the left wing and soldiers' leaders who brought it to power.

It has implemented the policies of the IMF: devaluation, cuts in government spending and a wage freeze. The cedi has been devalued so often that people have lost count. At the time of the coup it was 2.75 cedi to

the US dollar, but now the exchange is only about 90 to the dollar!

This has meant that ordinary people cannot afford imported goods, prices are rising, and thousands of workers are being laid off.

These IMF policies are being pushed down the throats of the people in the name of the revolution. The working people who defended Rawlings have now been betrayed. But despite repression there is growing support for workers' democracy and the ideas of the *Revolutionary Banner*, the organ of the United Revolutionary Front.

How did the workers come to support Rawlings?

It seemed to the workers and youth that the coup of 31 December 1981 which brought Rawlings to power was different from the many other coups in Ghanaian history. This was not an officer-led coup but one carried out by the 'other ranks' (corporals, sergeants, etc) against the corruption of the moneymen: politicians, top officers, and businessmen.

More than that, Rawlings said this coup would lead to a 'real revolution' in which power would be in the hands of the people. We in the June Fourth Movement (later one of the founding groups of the United Revolutionary Front—*editor*) supported Rawlings who was a member of our organisation and told the working people they should organise themselves to take power.

Before the coup we had called on working people in our paper *Workers' Banner* to form Defence Committees to fight for their rights. When the coup occurred we saw it as 'our own thing' and a chance to make the revolution on the basis of our ideas.

There was tremendous excitement and enthusiasm among the progressive organisations and many of the workers.

The then June Fourth Movement called a meeting of the progressive organisations to support the coup. On 5 January 1982 Rawlings broadcast a call for the setting up of committees to defend the coup—Workers' Defence Committees (WDCs) in the workplaces and Peoples' Defence Committees in the communities and suburbs.

The progressive organisations welcomed this move and proposed these organisations should be

co-ordinated nationally and also form the basis for peoples' assemblies.

How were the Workers' Defence Committees organised?

At first the workers' support for the WDCs was mixed with doubts and some confusion. They had experienced many coups and doubted whether Rawlings would last long. Even though thousands attended meetings there was hesitation.

The workers wanted to know from us, "If we form the committees won't we be in trouble if the government collapses?" "Won't the moneymen and senior officers crack down on us?"

We told them: "Listen to Rawlings, this is a real revolution and the working people must take power." We said that the government was only transitional and was opening the door to the revolution being implemented by them. No other government except a government of the working people would come to power. We ruled out the privileged classes ever taking power again.

How did you think the revolution would develop?

At the beginning of the coup we believed that the key question was building "peoples' power", that the Ghanaian revolution would have to go through a stage of "national democracy" before building socialism.

During this stage, we thought, there should be maximum unity of all classes: workers, peasants, middle class, and local capitalists who were not involved in corruption. We believed we had to have this stage to be able to work with the "progressive bourgeoisie" to improve the economy and to train a Marxist-Leninist cadre in places like Russia and Cuba.

Those were the teachings we relied on, under Moscow's influence especially. We believed them to be the genuine Marxist ideas.

But throughout all the struggles which opened up after the coup I



Jerry ("Junior Jesus") Rawlings.

never found a single progressive bourgeois. They just don't exist in Ghana! Instead we found that the moneymen were just using the time to sabotage our projects and the WDCs. Rawlings was just using this time to prepare to attack the genuine revolutionaries, especially those in the WDCs.

What were the tasks of the WDCs?

As I said the workers had many doubts about the WDCs. But everything changed when a Managing Director of a state corporation in Tema made himself chairman of a WDC with the support of other officials and two trade union leaders. When he declared support for the coup the workers then saw that the privileged classes were seizing the initiative and they responded by forming real WDCs in factory after factory.

After the workers in the Cocoa Marketing Board and in Tema exposed corruption and sacked the moneymen there was great publicity and the WDCs mushroomed everywhere in their thousands. Everywhere there was a struggle to

make sure the workers were in the leadership and that the oppressor classes were kept out.

White collar workers were very helpful and produced files exposing corruption in the companies. Investigations were made into how the moneymen had got their wealth, corrupt managers were dismissed, and houses and cars confiscated.

But in some areas where the workers had not entered the WDCs fully, lumpen elements took control and there were fierce struggles against them.

What was your work?

As the defence committees grew, the progressive organisations helped form a National Defence Committee to co-ordinate and support their activities. I was head of the department of projects and programmes which included the confiscation of bourgeois properties.

The National Defence Committee was given the farms, lands, houses, and cars which had been confiscated from the moneymen by the WDCs and also by the former military regime. This became one of the most important departments.

The wealth of the businessmen is quite obscene. I was given the job of reallocating the palace of Kojo Sardine—given this nickname because he used to load workers on to a tipper truck like tinned sardines to take them to his quarry.

He owned a palace with two swimming pools and a paddling pond for the kids as well as a number of flats around this palace. In his house he had a splendid grave where he hoped to be buried!

How did the June Fourth Movement work with the WDCs?

After the WDCs mushroomed we called on the workers to prepare to take power. We called for a socialist program and a struggle against devaluation which was the policy of the capitalists. A section of the Rawlings government (called the Provisional National Defence Committee) called us the 'programmers' because we were always saying the revolution needed a socialist program!

We were leading the National Defence Committee which was the only body supporting the demands of the WDCs and PDCs. When the workers went to see Rawlings they

"Throughout all the struggles which opened up after the coup I never found a single 'progressive bourgeois'. They just don't exist in Ghana."

were often beaten by the soldiers.

Despite all the problems the workers gave tremendous support to the revolution. When Nigeria threatened to cut off oil supplies to Ghana if we attacked businessmen, the workers said they were quite prepared to walk!

Despite this enthusiasm the WDCs were always wanting the Rawlings government to authorise their actions against corruption and sabotage. When they found that Rawlings was not prepared to rubber-stamp their decisions, they turned to us in the National Defence Committee for support.

The WDCs started calling for a socialist program and gravitated around the National Defence Committee. They said Rawlings was becoming an impediment to the revolution and called on us to take power. At that time it would have been quite possible because the 'other ranks' (the soldiers' leaders) supported our ideas and they had the guns.

Although the objective conditions of the socialist revolution were ripe, the subjective conditions—the strategy and leadership—were lacking.

As our power increased, so the right wing declared there was a parallel government in the country:

"Although the objective conditions of the socialist revolution were ripe, the strategy and leadership were lacking."

the Rawlings' government and the workers' government in the National Defence Committee.

They called on Rawlings to act against us, and in October and November 1982 he arrested leading left-wingers on the WDCs and called for an end to class hatred. He demanded that the WDCs be opened to all members of society including chiefs and millionaires!

How was the crisis resolved?

The crisis came to a head over the economic questions. We knew that the country had enormous resources which could be developed if they were controlled and worked on by the people.

We realised we were completely dependent on the West with cocoa exports the only basis for earning foreign exchange. We did not expect much from foreign aid, but we felt if the workers were in control and the imperialist plunder of our economy was stopped, the economic problems could be solved.

In Ghana there is the scandal that enormous amounts of food are imported while one region alone could feed the whole of West Africa! We felt if we could get control of enough tractors and trucks we could be able to export food and earn foreign exchange.

We also wanted to get the timber industry controlled by the state. In the National Defence Committee we tried to mobilise resources, but the capitalists and managers were constantly sabotaging our efforts. They preferred machinery lying around and rusting than being used to help the peasants and workers.

The economy was so backward because of capitalist sabotage that gold ore had to be flown to Switzerland in planes for refining! How could we check what they were doing with it?

We thought we would get a lot of support from Libya or Eastern Europe. At the time of independence they were literally begging to give us assistance, but after setting up embassies they have lost interest. The only advice they could give us was, "Don't try to break out of the grip of imperialism, it won't work!"

All they could provide us was some promises on gold refining. I don't think the leaders of Eastern Europe are interested in revolution in the Third World. Once an embassy is established they don't want any confrontation and are more interested in the arms race and international prestige.

Nicaragua

They said Nicaragua was a test case for a Third World country trying to break free from imperialism—obviously they were worried about having another dependent country like Cuba. They have held the Sandinistas back from overthrowing capitalism, just as they held us back in Ghana.

When it became obvious there was no possibility of miracles from out-



Former President Kwame Nkrumah celebrating Ghana's independence with Indian Prime Minister Nehru in 1957.

side the country all discussion centred on devaluation. Rawlings demanded an alternative to devaluation from us. We worked day and night for 10 days which was all the time we were given to produce an alternative economic strategy. The IMF stooges had been given 8 months to do their work!

We argued devaluation would be the kiss of death if it was not part of a wider strategy.

All this debate was completely worthless as there had been secret negotiations between Rawlings and the IMF which were concluded on the basis of a loan of \$430m being provided if the cedi was devalued.

Instead of carrying out socialist measures Rawlings purged the leadership of all left-wingers. In April 1983 the cedi was devalued. The leaders of the soldiers who had brought him to power were neutralised, imprisoned or shot as in the case of Sergeant Adinar, and Corporals Aliu and Giwah.

In December 1984 Rawlings removed all pretence at workers' power and formally dissolved the Workers' Defence Committees.

What is the future for the Ghanaian working people?

We in the United Revolutionary Front are sure that our ideas for the reorganisation of all genuine revolutionaries within the country will take place. The IMF policies have not brought economic relief to the people and the country's resources are being handed over to the multinationals.

We are optimistic that the discontent already shown in the Trade Union Congress indicates the workers' movement is reviving and showing its independence from the Rawlings regime.

Our paper, *Revolutionary Banner*, is widely read in the country. Recently a circular was distributed throughout the country warning people not to follow our ideas. We take this as a recognition of our growing influence.

We fully support the struggle of the workers and youth in South Africa for freedom and socialism and look forward to the day when together we can build a Socialist Federation of Africa.

ZIMBABWE: The power of the bosses must be broken

by Elma Louw

Independence five years ago meant for the Zimbabwean people the huge gain of majority rule—but the wealth of the country remains in the hands of the employers.

The uneasy compromise between the government and big business has been sharply illustrated by the conflict in October/November 1985 over the setting of a minimum wage in the agro-industry.

On 1 July 1985, as an election sweetener, the government announced a new wage of \$143.75 for workers in the agro-industry which employs 40 000 workers on coffee, tea, sugar, timber and fruit plantations.

After the announcement all hell broke loose on the side of the bosses. Although now reaping huge profits from a good rainy season and bumper harvests, many complained that they would be forced to close plantations and sack 10 000 workers!

Confusion arose when a junior ministry official said the new wage for the agro-industry was withdrawn. But a day later Frederick Shava, the Minister of Labour, said the new wage was definitely on!

The bosses were given a September deadline to start paying the new wage. The minister said that those employers who were facing financial hardship could apply for exemption, as long as the application had the ap-

proval of the workers' committee.

By the beginning of November Shava had already received 350 exemption applications!

But the September deadline was met with a wave of struggle among the plantation workers. At the Katiyo tea estate in Honde Valley 2 000 workers went on strike demanding the new wage, despite pleas from the ministry, the agricultural union and ZANU leaders to end the strike. By 4 October the workers had won!

At Eastern Highlands tea estate the workers barricaded the manager in his office. He was freed after five hours of negotiations. The estate was then closed until an agreement between workers and management could be reached.

Demand

Claremont Orchards, the largest producer of deciduous fruit, also closed its estate after the workers struck demanding the new minimum wage.

At the Anglo American complex in Mazowe, workers struck demanding the new wage for all workers across the entire complex.

Workers at a coffee farm in Chipinge were refusing to collect their pay until they were paid \$143.75.

There has been unrest at many more estates, plantations, and processing factories. In all cases the workers were discouraged from taking action by the ministry and by ZANU leaders. Worse still, police were used to break up protests. At Katiyo, for example, the police used tearsmoke to attack a crowd of workers.

The agricultural union leaders in-



The Bulawayo Chronicle published this picture of workers at the Treger Industry factory manhandling National Engineering Workers' Union regional organiser Solomon Ndlovu. Workers are beginning to demonstrate their intolerance of this union leadership's record of corruption and class-collaboration.

tervened to help break the protest, offering to negotiate a lower wage. Some bosses managed to pressurise the workers' committee into signing a wage deal of \$85 a month.

But even that could not always divide the workers. At a citrus farm in Mashonaland Central, workers simply rejected the deal and then sent their own representatives to Harare for talks with the ministry.

Pressure

Then, in November, buckling under capitalist pressure, the government scandalously climbed down. It withdrew the \$143.75 minimum wage, and made the employers' offer of \$85 the new legal minimum wage for the agro-industry. This move embittered and angered workers.

This one example makes very clear the dilemma facing the regime in Zimbabwe. At independence it pro-

mised socialist transformation to the people, but at the same time promised the capitalists that they would be allowed to operate freely.

Mixture

But how is it possible to have a mixture of socialism and capitalism? Mugabe proudly announces to meetings of foreign businessmen that Zimbabwe has not nationalised any major enterprise since independence. But you cannot control what you do not own. The economy is in the hands of the capitalists, and the capitalists will dictate economic policy, including wages.

Workers need a living wage. Industrial workers on a minimum wage of around \$150 a month already live in hardship. Many cannot eat meat more than once a week, and then it is only 'ration-meat'. Agro-industry workers, surely, should not earn less.

This shows again that the workers

cannot wait for the government to solve their problems for them. Only by fighting for their own interests against the government's compromise with the capitalists can workers change the situation.

As Marxists explained since before independence, the capitalist system cannot offer decent living standards to the mass of working people in Zimbabwe. Even the present economic upturn offers no real chance of meeting the workers' basic needs.

Economy

During 1985 Zimbabwe's economy moved out of recession. Good rains have led to good harvests. Farm production, mainly cotton, maize and wheat, increased by 25% in 1985.

The upturn in agriculture has given a boost to the economy as a whole, which is now growing by 6% (after dropping 3,5% in 1983).

The employers are reaping the fruits in increased profits from sales at home and abroad. Tobacco sales, for example, were 30% higher than in 1984.

The improved economic climate has given renewed confidence to the workers. During the years of recession from 1982 to 1984, they have suffered real cuts in income, and many workers have lost their jobs. About 20 000 manufacturing jobs disappeared.

Since independence there has been no real improvement in living standards, which are now 20% lower than in 1974. **Employment in 1985 was lower than in 1975, while the population has risen by more than 2 million people.**

The 15% wage rise announced before the elections is already being wiped out by the price rises which started coming just after the elections. On 31 August 1985 the price of maize meal, the staple diet, increased by 27%.

Since the 1980-81 strike wave, section after section of workers have faced defeat at the hands of the government and bosses. But the fact that Zimbabwean workers are still able to fight is shown in the new wave of strikes, protests and 'work-ins'.

In Tsungubvi suburb in Mazowe,

for example, 4 000 women demonstrated on 1 November against a 60% rise in council service charges. Although the 15% wage rise was announced in early July, many employers, including councils, have so far refused to pay it. Mazowe Rural Council, Kwekwe Council and many more are facing protests from their workers, who have to fight even to get the official increase implemented.

Work-in

In Kwekwe, 2 000 municipal workers organised a work-in protest to enforce the 15% wage increase. The protest lasted several days, and a cabinet minister had to intervene to discuss with councillors and workers.

A member of the workers' committee said the workers had confiscated the keys for two mayoral cars, because Mayor Mtandwa was misusing them for personal business.

Workers must have wondered what side the government was on when minister Hove (also the ZANU Midlands chairman) told them on 18 October to end the work-in and go home. Any worker found on municipal premises, he threatened, would be arrested. Hove then ordered the police to guard all government premises.

There have also been struggles in defence of jobs. At Springmaster Furniture in Harare, workers occupied the firm, locked management out and kept production going. There were violent clashes, and a senior manager was seriously hurt.

Workers were protesting against the imposition of judicial management and its decision to make 200-300 workers redundant.

In the end the workers' committee gave up, because they could see no alternative when faced with the capitalist 'logic' of the bosses and the Mugabe government combined. Now the company's fortunes have revived, and it has resumed the same level of production without reinstating the 'redundant' workers!

What all these struggles tend to show is that the workers do not as yet have enough strength and confidence to fight their battles to the end or to move onto the offensive. In most

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 RANATH KUMARASINGHE

21st. August 1985

**The General Secretary,
 International Metalworkers Federation,**

Dear Sir,

International Metalworkers' Federation report on the General
 Engineering and Metal Workers' Union, Zimbabwe

It is our considered opinion that the report made by your investigation team sent to Zimbabwe, is clearly biased and based on information from the secret police. We had the opportunity to go through your report in the light of discussions we had with a delegation from 'Zimbabwe Trade Unionist Defence Campaign'. Thus our conclusions are based on critical analysis of all the information available.

We hope to launch campaign among Trade Unions through out the Indian Sub Continent to reject your report and we condemn severely the repression of Trade Unionists by the Secret Police in Zimbabwe.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,
 UNITED FEDERATION OF LABOUR - SRI LANKA,

Ronnie Perera
 Ronnie Perera
 GENERAL SECRETARY.

In March 1985, the Mugabe government detained fourteen trade unionists and socialists involved in a struggle for a fighting and democratic leadership of GEM-WU. As a result of international labour movement protest, the International Metalworkers' Federation sent a representative to Zimbabwe to report on the situation. Without speaking with any of those who had been detained, this representative wrote a report which failed to condemn the detentions, and echoed the falsifications and distortions provided by the regime and its security police.

disputes they have been fighting only to enforce the improvements already promised by the government but not implemented.

The main reason the workers do not have more confidence is the lack of strong organisation. A mass trade union movement, if united and with militant leadership, would put much more pressure on employers than a well-paid government official!

The workers are still suffering the consequences of the way the liberation war was led. Leadership was in the hands of the middle-class politicians and the guerilla commanders. They did not mobilise the working

class or involve them in the struggle.

Today the same middle-class leaders are at the head of the government, civil service and army. The working class is still without an effective leadership of its own.

The trade unions are very weak. Most are dominated by corrupt officials who are mistrusted and even hated by the workers. Many workers therefore do not want to join unions.

During 1983 and 1984, activists in the General Engineering and Metal Workers' Union (GEMWU) fought to change their union into an effective, democratic organisation of the workers. The corrupt general



Ronnie Perera, general secretary of the Sri Lanka United Federation of Labour—here pictured with tea plantation union members—wrote the above letter to the IMF condemning this report.

Engineering and metalworkers' unions affiliated to the IMF world-wide—and particularly MAWU in South Africa—should join with the Sri Lanka United Federation of Labour in campaigning for the IMF to repudiate this report.

secretary of the union, Chimusoro, was so hostile to this campaign that he engineered the arrest and torture of activists (who were leaders in workers' committees and ZANU(PF)) by the government's Central Intelligence Organisation (security police).

Mugabe has since warned workers in effect that any organised struggle for trade union democracy and against corrupt leadership will be treated as 'subversive'. Nevertheless, struggles against corrupt and pro-capitalist unions' leaderships are occurring and will grow.

GEMWU is now called National

Engineering Workers' Union (NEWU)—but its officials are still the same, and just as unpopular with the workers. Chimusoro is still signing deals with employers without consulting the workers. At Treger Industries in Bulawayo, after one such agreement, the regional organising secretary of NEWU had to be protected by the workers' committee from 250 angry workers!

The task of building effective working-class organisation is urgent. Economic growth in the next few years will not be a repeat of 1985. Capitalism internationally will plunge

into another deep crisis after possibly one or two years of slowdown in growth, and Zimbabwe will be dragged along.

This year the growth rate of Zimbabwe is expected to be 3%, half that of 1985. South Africa, Zimbabwe's major trading partner, has an enormous crisis of its own and is already putting up barriers against Zimbabwe's exports.

On top of ordinary customs duties, South Africa has levied another 10% duty on all imports, and 50% on wire rod, from Zimbabwe. This could mean the end of Zimbabwe's Lancashire Steel factory, which has depended heavily on the South African market.

Prospects

The prospects for Zimbabwe under capitalism are very bleak. Industrial recovery will be held back by the shortage of foreign exchange needed to import capital goods. In fact, the foreign currency crisis will get worse because the crisis in other capitalist countries will force them to cut back on imports from Zimbabwe.

Without adequate markets or the necessary investment, production in Zimbabwe is bound to fall. For workers that will mean more cuts in living standards and more job losses.

The mass of the people, who expected big improvements after independence, will become more and more disappointed and discontented. Tens of thousands of youth, for example, want jobs. They cannot be expected to work as Youth Brigade 'volunteers' for ever, building schools, houses and co-operatives without pay.

Massive struggles will build up in Zimbabwe over very basic demands—a proper job, a proper wage, and a proper house.

These problems of underdevelopment and poverty cannot be solved under the capitalist system. On the contrary, they will get worse, and further inflame the national divisions between the Shona majority and Ndebele minority, so long as working people are not united in a common struggle to end capitalism.

Even though Mugabe and Nkomo may find it in their interests to sign an agreement, their 'unity' will not



Zimbabwean mineworkers employed by the multi-national company Lonrho.



Mugabe's exhortations do not solve the problems of the workers and peasants.

solve low wages, unemployment, bad housing, or the bitterness and tribal hatred created by political leaders on both sides.

Bureaucratic 'unity' between ZANU and ZAPU leaders is intended to bring about the 'one-party state'. Such a state will be a machine to repress future discontent and political opposition, from among Shona as well as Ndebele people, against the capitalist policies of the regime.

Five years of independence have proved that the 'mixed' economy does not provide a solution, not even with a black government in power. The problems of the workers and peasants can only be ended by ending the capitalist system.

For this the working class must be strongly organised and united round a programme for the socialist transformation of society.

Workers' power

The struggle for workers' power and socialism in Zimbabwe has to confront the problem of South Africa's domination of the region, militarily and economically. 90% of Zimbabwe's trade depends on South Africa's railways and harbours.

But the working people of Zimbabwe have a very strong ally across

the southern border. Huge struggles are being fought in South Africa by the massive black working class against the same capitalist system, and in many cases against the same employers.

Develop forces

Years of mighty battles will be needed to develop the forces that can overthrow capitalism in South Africa and the region as a whole. The immediate task in Zimbabwe, in the present period of hardening dictatorship, is to build strong workers' committees in the factories and plantations, as a basis for freeing the trade unions from bureaucratic control and building them as strong nation-wide organisations of workers' struggle.

This would also lay a basis for the socialist rank and file of ZANU and ZAPU to begin to transform their organisations into instruments for carrying the revolution forward.

The activists in the workers' committees and trade unions, and among the youth and women, need to be convinced of the need for genuine socialist policies and a workers' and peasants' government. They need to see clearly that Mugabe's policy of compromise with capitalism has to be opposed, and that the power of the bosses must be broken.

Only when industry, mining and

large-scale agriculture are nationalised under democratic working-class control can there be production for the benefit of the masses—and not for the profits of the few.

A genuinely socialist society cannot be attained within the limits of one or a few countries, especially when they are poor and underdeveloped. But the foundations for socialism can be laid, and socialist construction take place under a regime of workers' democracy, along with the spread of the revolution internationally. Everywhere, workers must assist each other in a common struggle for power in order to begin along this road.

Build links

Strong links need to be built with the workers and youth in South Africa to discuss the tasks of the revolution, and to support each other in the struggle.

In the battles that will build up in Zimbabwe over the next few years, against the bosses and against the policies of the regime, these socialist policies will be proved correct. If the correct basis is patiently laid during the present difficult period, once the mass of workers and youth move into action to change society, the ideas of Marxism can gain decisive support.

Crisis on world commodity markets

by Mick Brooks

Reprinted from *Militant*,
Marxist paper for labour
and youth in Britain,
3 January 1986

Every day at 12.40 in the City of London, 28 men troop into a room and start shouting at each other. These men are fixing the day's world market price of the metals that we all need and millions depend on mining to make a living.

The recent suspension of trading in tin on the London Metals Exchange threatens to spread to other commodities (metals and raw materials), bringing chaos in their production and trade all over the world. The threatened default of the International Tin Council on its debts could drag down some banks. Commodity prices, themselves a victim of the world economic crisis, by plunging still further, threaten to contribute to making that crisis deeper.

The producers of the basic commodities are scattered all over the world. They have no idea how much of their product can be sold at any given moment. All they can do is

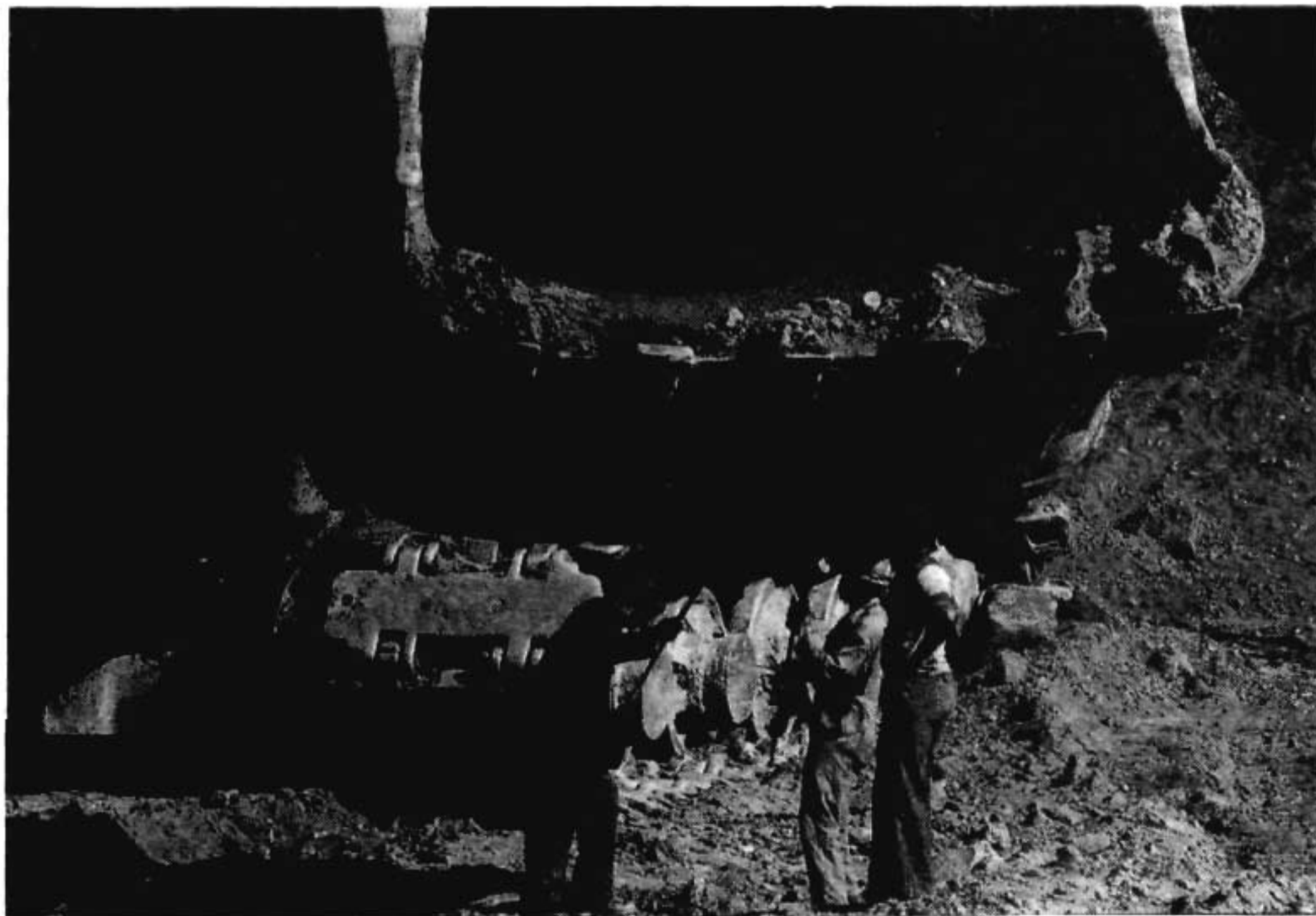
watch the price. Their activities are knitted together through the operations of the London Metals Exchange and the other great metropolitan commodity exchanges. The activities of these merchants and speculators cannot abolish the anarchy inherent in capitalism, but reproduce that anarchy on a global scale.

The commodity producers need money now to invest so as to continue producing for the future. For instance a tea bush cannot be picked for seven years after planting. The money will be advanced in exchange for a piece of paper entitling the bearer to a share of the Kenyan tea harvest in 1992. These 'futures' then become an object of speculation.

Money men may bet that late frosts in 1991 will hoist the price of tea for 1992, or on any other of a thousand things that could happen to a 'harvest' that has not even been planted yet. Typically on the commodity exchanges a hundred transactions will just pass the piece of paper from hand to hand for every one that actually leads to a delivery of a commodity.

A common objection to socialism is that it will have to involve rationing. Capitalism works through rationing through price. Only the rich have many more 'ration tickets' than the rest and can ride out a shortage-induced price hike.

These can occur for the most obscure reasons. Once every ten years a cold current off the coast of Peru—'el nino'—often drives the anchovies into deep waters away from their usual haunts. This hoists fishmeal prices, which in turn can make meat prices soar. Apologists



Workers at Chingola open pit mine, Zambia: badly hit by falling world copper prices.

for capitalism praise the usefulness of the speculators. For by driving up the price of meat they encourage farmers to turn to livestock raising and so overcome the shortage.

In reality market laws wreak havoc on producer and consumer alike. Unfortunately a rise in the price of beef does not call forth an immediate increase in the supply of full-grown cows. They will take years to breed up. But by that time there will usually be a massive oversupply as farmers all over the world have jumped on the bandwagon. As the price collapses, calves are slaughtered and governments pay out subsidies to stop farmers overproducing in a vain effort to keep the price up. Such is the 'magic of the marketplace'!

Commodity prices are extraordinarily susceptible to fluctuations in supply and demand. A small overshoot can lead to a collapse in prices with disastrous effects on the producers, while a slight shortfall can crucify consumers through impossibly high prices. And such fluctuations are inherent in an unplanned system and magnified enormously by the speculators.

Boom-slump cycle

Commodity prices basically depend on the boom-slump cycle of capitalism—rising in a boom with the rise in demand, and collapsing in a slump. The fall in the price of raw materials at length helps capitalism to recover enough to prepare for the next hurdle in the steeplechase. In fact the major reason for the fall in the rate of inflation in the West has been the collapse in the current recession of commodity prices to their lowest levels since the 1930s. As the *Economist* points out, the 10 per cent fall in prices this year alone represents a £65 billion gift from the poor countries to the rich.

The price collapse of the 1930s, though, was not all good news for the capitalists of the advanced countries. The major reason for the rash of national bankruptcies that took place in the underdeveloped world in the 1930s was the collapse in the price of the raw materials they lived on by exporting. These bankruptcies in turn gave the banks of the imperialist countries who had lent them the money no end of jitters.

Now once again we have a crisis of



The London Metal Exchange: the anarchy of the capitalist 'free market'.

capitalism. Once more there is a world debt crisis. Again a deeper collapse in the price of commodities could trigger off enforced bankruptcies and a banking collapse.

The post-war economic order was supposed to have learned from the problems of the 1930s. In fact these problems are rooted in the inner nature of the system. Trade in commodities was regulated by international agreements like the International Tin Council composed of both producing and consuming countries. The aim was to iron out unpredictable price fluctuations which disrupt the harmonious development of the capitalist world.

The poorer commodity-exporting countries have been inspired by the success of OPEC in yanking up oil prices to establish their own price-fixing rings. They have appointed buffer stock managers to intervene in the anarchy of the market by buying up surplus stocks and taking them off the market to keep prices up.

The problem, as with all cartels, is that it is easy enough to buy commodities on the market when prices are high and the producer countries' revenues are good—but in times of prosperity, intervention is unnecessary to bolster prices. It is quite another matter in a period of slump, which means depressed commodity prices and therefore low earnings. Just when they need to intervene, the producer countries do not have the wherewithall to do so.

This is what happened to tin. The buffer stock manager ran out of money and eventually was borrowing from the banks to buy unwanted tin at a loss. The credit lines stretched beyond endurance. The ITC then

reneged on debts of up to £1 billion and a stockpile of 68 000 tonnes of tin.

The ITC buffer stock manager built up his £1 billion debt by using the stockpile as security. It was assumed to be worth £8 500 – £9 500 per tonne. But when trading in tin reopens the price could crash to as low as £4 000 per tonne. At that price the ITC could not repay its debts and the banks that have lent to them—such as Standard Chartered, Hambros and Kleinwort Benson—could be on the skids together with a sizeable chunk of the financial establishment.

Stockpiles

The buffer stock would still have to be sold off even at only £4 000 a tonne to recoup part of the losses. A £1 billion stockpile would suddenly become a £300 million stockpile—up to £700 million lost at the stroke of a pen. In that case the buffer stock could keep the world supplied for nine months without an ounce being mined anywhere.

For at £4 000 a tonne, only 22 out of 400 mines in Malaysia (the world's largest producer) would survive. In Thailand 275 out of 600 would go, folding up 24 000 of 35 000 jobs.

If tin does crash, and they are desperately trying to stitch up a deal to avert that possibility, the consumers will not get the benefit. For, superimposed over the boom-slump cycle of commodity prices, are longer-term trends. One of these



Rubber workers in Indonesia: their livelihood also under threat.

trends is that with the advance of technology, there is an economising on scarce raw materials. As a result, tin is only 2 per cent of the cost of tinsplate, traditionally its biggest use. There is only 50p worth of tin in the solder in a whole television set.

The tin crisis has caused trade in other metals to dry up. The London Metals Exchange is walking on eggs.

Sugar is the most depressed commodity of the lot, because the institutionalised overproduction of sugar beet in the European Common Market is driving the traditional cane producers to the wall. Sugar was recently selling as low as 2½ cents a pound and being fed to animals. That price is less than 4p (about 14 SA cents) for a standard kilo bag. Did anyone notice a dramatic drop in the price to the housewife?

Rubber is losing bounce and could be the next commodity to come under pressure. The International Rubber Organisation's buffer stock manager has spent \$390 million since 1981 building up a 400 000 tonnes stockpile. Now he is passing round the hat for another \$3 000 million to buy an extra 150 000 tonnes. As the price drops, he runs out of money.

In a crisis, cut-throat price wars break out between different producers rushing to offload their surplus at almost any price. In other

words they respond to the glut by overproducing and to the price collapse by offering discounts.

Indonesia for instance plans to expand its rubber production by 8 per cent a year for each of the next four years. Yet Indonesia was a major pillar of the tin agreement and was stitched up by cowboys like Brazil and China who unloaded their surplus on the world market, breaking up their cosy cartel.

It is precisely the countries that caught a cold on tin—Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand—that could get pneumonia off rubber. Three million Malaysians, one quarter of the workforce, depend on rubber tapping to make a living.

This tendency to economise on the consumption of scarce raw materials is going on all over. Miniaturised batteries mean less demand for lead. More and more metals are replaced by cheap plastics. The computerisation of stock records means smaller stock holding throughout industry. All this is an extra twist of the knife for commodity producers.

Another and relatively long-term trend is the movement of what are called the terms of trade away from the countries producing raw materials. This trend is disrupted from time to time by the chaos of international trade, but it represents a

robbery of the poorest countries. They have to export more and more to pay for the manufactured goods they import.

Thailand for instance exported 30 per cent more rubber this year, but its earnings on rubber fell by 8 per cent. Malaysia depends on five export earners—crude oil, palm oil, tin, rubber and timber. Whereas in 1980 it was earning 72 per cent of foreign earnings from the five, by 1985 it was down to 56 per cent. This was before the recent collapse in the price of palm oil and the tin calamity.

As pointed out earlier the change in the terms of trade has awarded the rich countries £65 billion this year, responsible for a quarter of their growth. Generally commodities (except oil) are at 75 per cent of their 1970 level now. Sugar, one tonne of which would have bought 41 barrels of oil in 1975 would now buy only four barrels.

We are now supposed to be in the middle of a world boom. It is a boom which has done nothing for the unemployed at home. It is also a boom in which commodity prices are still falling, bringing starvation to the poorest countries. As the *Financial Times* put it, the question is "that (commodity producers) will miss out on the booms while still suffering the busts".

Crisis of the Soviet economy

Capitalism was overthrown in Russia as a result of the workers' revolution of October 1917. But during the 1920s the working class lost power to a caste of state bureaucrats under the leadership of Stalin.

Capitalism was not restored. State ownership and planning were retained. But *Soviet society cannot be described as 'socialist'*. By that term Marxists mean a society under workers' democratic rule, in which inequality is steadily eliminated and the state 'withers away'.

Not only has the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union grown to monstrous proportions and inequality increased with it. The system of bureaucratic rule has produced a crisis in the economy which only the working class, by taking power back into its own hands, can solve.

George Collins

explains how this crisis has arisen and why the efforts of the bureaucracy, under their new leader Gorbachev, to escape it will fail.

Recently *Pravda* unveiled some techniques of economic management practised in the Kazakhstan region of the USSR.

Production statistics were widely falsified. One state farm, for example, showed a profit of five million roubles by listing the sale of pedigree cattle twice over! (1 rouble = about 3 rand.)

Pravda reports: "Over a million roubles were allocated to agricultural development, but food production actually fell... One factory in four



Gorbachev's 'new broom' cannot sweep away the economic impasse created by bureaucratic rule.

breaks its contracts for delivery of goods, and in the last four years there have been production shortfalls of over 90 million roubles."

Management on the other hand, rewarded itself generously. One senior Communist Party official built himself a hunting lodge, complete with servants' flat, out of state funds. Others secretly built a private mansion equipped with "the best carpets, televisions and hi-fi equipment", and registered it as an apartment block with 12 flats.

Another, who already had a private house, was given a second four-room flat for his family plus a flat for each of his three daughters.

All the disastrous consequences of bureaucratic rule, analysed and anticipated by Trotsky fifty years ago, can now be seen clearly in practice.

It was to try and solve these problems that the new broom, Mikhail Gorbachev, was appointed state leader when Chernenko died in March. Representing a section of bureaucrats slightly younger than the doddering ruling elite installed during the Brezhnev era, Gorbachev was expected to reform the system and set the economy back on the road to growth.

The great strength of the Russian economy has been the fact that it is state-owned and centrally planned. This has freed it from the narrow limits of production for profit only, and from the plunder and sabotage of big business.

This is the one achievement of the 1917 working-class revolution that has survived the bureaucratic counter-revolution headed by Stalin from the early 1920s onwards.

Despite the waste and bottlenecks caused by bureaucratic mismanagement by the privileged elite, rapid growth was possible for a whole period while the foundations of the modern economy were being laid. This growth was based on exploiting the USSR's abundance of natural resources, and an almost unlimited supply of labour as millions of peasants were drawn to the cities.

Planning

Even with a minimum of planning, the relatively simple tasks of building an infrastructure were carried out at far greater speed than under the chaotic conditions of capitalist "supply and demand" (though, as Trotsky pointed out, at three times the cost).

The present-day Soviet economy, however, can no longer be managed effectively by bureaucratic decree from above. Like every advanced economy it is highly complex, requiring sophisticated decision-making at every level. The Stalinist system rules this out.

In the past, the leadership, with typical bureaucratic shortsightedness,

neglected investment in new technology as long as growth could be squeezed from existing resources. The result was technical stagnation and, by the 1960s, increasing obsolescence in methods of production.

Today, average productivity in the Soviet Union is only 55 per cent that of the advanced capitalist countries.

On the other hand, economic growth led to an increase in workers' buying power and in the demand for good-quality consumer goods. The bureaucracy is incapable of meeting this demand.

Short supply

The consumer goods turned out by the Ministry of Light industry are shoddy and in chronic short supply. Not for nothing is this Ministry nicknamed "the Ministry of Queues".

Because of the failures of the official system, a huge parallel ('black') economy has developed. It is estimated that 20 million people are working 'on the left' (illegally)—performing, for example, 80 per cent of domestic repair work.

Trade in smuggled goods is booming, even at vastly inflated prices. Sought-after commodities like imported jeans are sold for the equivalent of R630, and *Adidas* jogging suits for over R1 000. Even tomatoes fetch R70 per kilo in winter, and small cucumber R14 each.

The contradictions of the system were unwittingly summed up by the mother of a Russian astronaut proudly telling *Pravda* of the telephone just installed in her village home, but adding: "It's not like the phones in the city, of course. You have to crank the handle. Getting through to Moscow from our little village isn't easy, but sometimes you succeed." (*Pravda*, 22 July 1985).

What all this illustrates is, in Marxist terms, that the political system in the Soviet Union has become an absolute fetter on the productive forces. Bureaucratic misrule is crippling the economic life of the country.

Gorbachev's 'solution' is to try to streamline the bureaucracy's grip on the economy—and even in this he is unlikely to have more than temporary, limited success.

His first move was to replace old

bureaucrats with new ones, mainly his personal hangers-on. He has continued the process already started by Andropov of removing the tired, discredited hacks installed by Brezhnev during the 1960s and 1970s and installing his own instead.

Eleven new ministers slightly younger than the Brezhnev gerontocracy, and dozens of new regional party chiefs, were appointed between March and August 1985. In the process, some of the unsavoury practices of the old bureaucrats could conveniently be exposed and a few scapegoats sacrificed with maximum publicity (as in Kazakhstan) to show the 'reforming zeal' of the new leadership.

While the top clique was being recycled, official economists were falling over themselves to offer Gorbachev advice.

'Liberals' pointed out that the Soviet economy is "antiquated and inflexible", and that 'conservative bureaucrats' are standing in the way of change. The latter, on the other hand, warned with equal logic of the dangers of increasing "free enterprise"—i.e. loosening of bureaucratic control.

More liberal policies, they say, are all right in a country like Hungary which is "small and easily governed"—but could lead to "destabilising differences" in the USSR!

The Moscow correspondent of the

London *Observer* summed up the situation: "Gorbachev's problem is how to change a vigorously centralised system, designed to industrialise at brutal speed a predominantly peasant country, into one with the flexibility to use the talents to which it has now given birth.

"Have you acquired greater initiative in your work over the past 15 years?' a group of 250 factory directors was asked in a recent survey. Over half of them replied 'no'. A third said 'rather the reverse'."

Pressures

The response of Gorbachev, like every Stalinist leader before him, is to try to strike a balance between all these conflicting pressures. Instead he ends up performing a juggling act that fails to come to grips with any of the underlying problems.

A decree published in August, contained the long-awaited economic reforms. Among its features are the following:

(a) It orders a limited degree of decentralisation, especially in consumer industries. From next year, decisions can be taken at lower levels of the official apparatus. Plant managers, for example, can use their profits up to the equivalent of R14



Queueing in Moscow for goods in short supply.

million to refurbish and update their equipment.

(b) New incentives are laid down for better work—for example, a five per cent bonus if a factory succeeds in meeting the required standards.

(c) Overall, however, Stalinism continues to rely on its basic method of management: the big stick. New punishments can be imposed, such as price cuts of up to 30 per cent if goods are below standard. The factory concerned would then have to make up this shortfall out of funds set aside for workers' bonuses.

Fines can also be imposed on factories for late delivery of goods. In fact there is nothing new about these measures. At various points in the past Gorbachev's predecessors were forced into similar exercises, including attacks on "bureaucracy" and turns towards "decentralisation".

"Decentralisation"

Within a Stalinist system, however, the main effect of "decentralisation" is to spread opportunities for corruption among wider circles of bureaucrats—thus forcing the top leaders to "recentralise" again before matters get completely out of hand.

This will undoubtedly be the fate of Gorbachev's "decentralisation" as well. His "new brooms" will soon become just as worn-out and discredited as the ones they have

replaced.

The workers will have no more control than before over the production process or the quality of what they produce. All that remains in the hands of their managers. Yet it is the workers who will end up paying the collective fines resulting from the incompetence and corruption of the factory bosses, who will naturally ensure that nothing comes out of their own pockets.

Cracking whip

While trying to harness the non-existent innovation of the lower bureaucracy and cracking the whip over the workers, Gorbachev is also trying to come to terms with the parallel economy. Just as Stalin was forced to tolerate small-scale private production by the peasantry, so under Gorbachev, as *Izvestia* puts it: "The nation is looking to private initiative as one way to satisfy many consumer complaints"

In one "experiment" of this nature, workers in a TV repair shop in Estonia are being allowed to keep their profits and finance their own business. It now takes them no more than three days to repair a TV set, while it previously took two weeks.

Gorbachev's "new leadership", in other words, is simply tail-ending the efforts that are spontaneously being made to overcome the disruption created by that same leadership.

Faced with the most developed working class in the world, the Russian bureaucracy cannot afford to genuinely decentralise power in any sense. "Experiments" in "private initiative" will remain confined to the fringes of the economy. They will not be allowed to intrude into crucial sectors such as electronics, heavy industry or transport. The bureaucracy cannot risk the development of competition that might expose their ineptitude or challenge their position.

Politically, the incurable weakness of Gorbachev's policies is that they continue to rely on the bureaucracy to solve the problems of bureaucratic rule. His reforms will fail for the same reason that those of Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev before him have failed.

As Trotsky explained in 1932:

"Centralised management implies not only great disadvantages but also the danger of centralising the mistakes... Only continuous regulation of the plan in the process of its fulfillment, its reconstruction in part and as a whole, can guarantee its economic effectiveness.

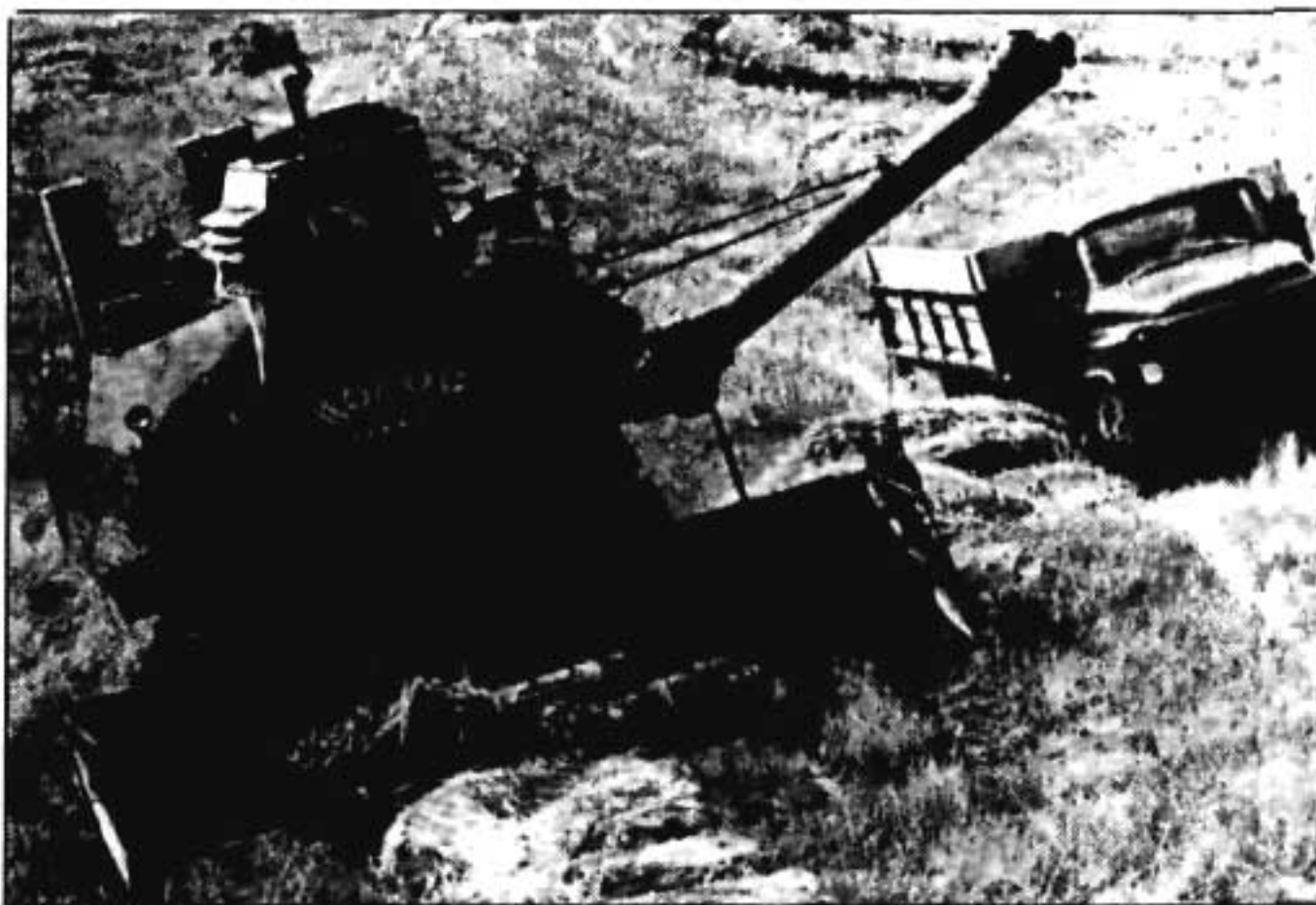
"The art of socialist planning does not drop from heaven nor is it presented full-blown into one's hands with the conquest of power. This art may be attained only by struggle, step by step, not by units but by millions as an integral part of the new economy and culture." (*Towards Socialism or Capitalism?* p100)

The "units" of the top bureaucracy, however, are terrified of letting any power slip from their hands, out of the very real fear that the workers would sweep them aside if they had the slightest opportunity of doing so. As a result, the "millions" of the working class are rigidly excluded from management of the planned economy.

No initiative

There is no room for checks, balances or initiative at plant or shop-floor level—not even the crude kind of "regulation" exerted by the capitalist market. To quote Trotsky again:

"Every attempt to influence economic management from below is immediately assigned to a deviation either to the Right or to the Left, that



Despite mechanisation, Russian agriculture is chronically inefficient.



Gorbachev with Thatcher: Western imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy both fear the threat of workers' revolution.

again onto the heads of his successors.

Instead of addressing the real issues, the new five-year plan will continue tinkering with "decentralisation" on the one hand, and on the other hand look for ways of increasing the production of consumer goods.

By its efforts to "decentralise", the bureaucracy is reflecting its incapacity to administer the economy in a centralised manner—and all the more disastrous will be its future swing-back towards centralism.

But in its concern over the production of consumer goods, the bureaucracy is showing a dim awareness of the need to pacify the mighty Soviet working class—to postpone the day when this slumbering giant will rise to its feet and brush the parasites from its back.

The "dissident" movement of the 1970s, based among intellectuals, has largely been smashed. Today it is the younger workers, more educated, more critical and less demoralised than their parents, who are emerging as the force most challenging the regime.

But Gorbachev's efforts to postpone the day of reckoning are only bringing it closer.

Gorbachev is, without intending it, putting the bureaucracy on the spot. He is demanding that the resources of the country be managed more effectively in order to raise living standards. Whatever temporary and partial improvements might be possible, these efforts will eventually founder in a swamp of bureaucratic indifference and corruption.

The effect of this failure, in the light of expectations raised by Gorbachev's exhortations today, will be to underline the bankruptcy of Russia's bureaucratic rulers all the more glaringly.

When the Russian working class moves, the power of the regime will crumble overnight—as in Hungary 1956—and the ruling caste will be flung into oblivion. But unlike Hungary, there will be no tanks to come to their rescue.

Out of the defeat of Stalinism, the working class will construct a society of genuine socialist democracy. Eastern Europe will be transformed, and the ripple effect of a new Russian "October" would galvanise workers into revolutionary struggle around the world.

is, it is practically made a capital offence. The bureaucratic upper crust, when all is said and done, has pronounced itself infallible in the sphere of socialist planning..."

In fact, this opens the door to every form of blundering, pilfering, nepotism and self-enrichment by the top officials who hold all the wealth of the country as well as all the power of the state in their "infallible" hands.

Nothing new

Economically, also, Gorbachev has nothing new to propose. He has no policy for increasing productivity and generating the massive new investment that is necessary to modernise the machinery of production.

He admits that four per cent growth per year, double the present rate, is needed to reach the necessary level of investment.

He demands that better use should be made of existing resources. For example, he seems to have vetoed plans made under Chernenko to increase agricultural production by reclaiming and cultivating more land. Gorbachev demands that more intensive use should be made of existing land, using the existing equipment.

These demands will fall on stony ground. Over every sector of the economy hangs the dark cloud of bureaucratic misrule, sapping all enthusiasm, driving millions to despair and anger. No lasting, all-round increase in production can be expected

on the basis of Gorbachev's policies, or any other policies imposed on the working class by bureaucratic decree.

But this seize-up of the forces of production is only one side of Russia's economic crisis. Interwoven with the contradictions within the system are those arising from Russia's relations with the capitalist world market.

Despite its great size, it is impossible for the Soviet Union to become (as Stalin claimed) independent of the world economy which is still dominated by the USA and other imperialist powers. Today, more than ever, economic development in the Soviet Union depends on advanced technology imported from abroad.

The next five-year plan (1986–1990) will belatedly include a crash programme of automation and new technology. For example, 77 000 teachers are being trained to provide computer education in schools. To make this possible, 4 000 micro-computers have already been ordered from Japan, and hundreds of thousands more will be needed.

But the bureaucracy is encountering new problems in paying for the imported technology, assembly lines, etc which are vital for growth. Most of its earnings of foreign hard-currency come from oil sales, which have been badly hit by the slump in the oil price.

The crisis of capitalism is exacerbating the crisis of Stalinism. Stalin's utopian policy of trying to build "socialism" in the confines of one country—which came to mean "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism—is rebounding once

THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALISM

By Peter Hadden
Reprinted from *Militant Irish Monthly*
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Examine the globe and you will find few countries where the national question in some form is not an issue. The colonial world is aflame with secessionist movements and struggles by national, religious, racial and tribal minorities against oppression.

In the Stalinist states, including Russia and China, the problem is not resolved. And now also in the advanced capitalist countries, even in areas where nationalism has been dormant for a century or centuries, the last decade has shown that it has the capacity to re-emerge.

Nations and nation states have not always existed. They are a product of the capitalist epoch and will disappear with the socialist transformation of society internationally.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the rising capitalist class in different parts of Europe performed the historically progressive function of overcoming feudal particularism, capturing for their industries a territory and a market and welding the peoples into nations. Out of this economic development there grew for the first time a national consciousness among people that they were 'British', 'French', 'German' or whatever.

Such a voluntary assimilation of tribal, village and in cases even national groups was possible because of the development of production.

From the beginning of this century the potential of national markets to satisfy the appetites of the expanding productive forces was exhausted. Today national boundaries and nation states are a reactionary barrier to further progress.

The largest multinationals today have annual turnovers greater than

the budgets of even major countries. A mere 25 companies account for 35% of total industrial production worldwide. At a time when, for example, one chemical company can satisfy world demand the existence of rival national chemical, steel, aerospace industries, etc, is a fetter on further progress.

Nationalisation

Yet just at the moment when the forces of production have outstripped national markets, and when the nation state stands as a brake on the further development of society, the tendency for nationalism to raise its head has become apparent again. This is one of the fundamental contradictions of the present period.

The explanation lies in the present profound economic impasse of both capitalism and Stalinism combined with the failure of the reformist leaderships of the labour movement



Peter Hadden, Editorial Board member, *Militant Irish Monthly*, addresses a meeting of the Irish Labour and Trade Union Group.

to show a way out. This explains developments in the Basque, Catalan and other regions of Spain, and similar developments in other countries.

But it is in the colonial world where this whole question is most sharply posed. By the beginning of this century capitalism had entered what Lenin referred to as its highest stage, the stage of imperialism. Imperialist conquest and plunder were nothing new. But the scale was different. In the space of a few decades virtually the entire globe was annexed by major capitalist powers.

As Lenin in his book *Imperialism* described it: "The characteristic of the period under review is the final partitioning of the globe in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has completed the seizure of the unoccupied territories of our planet." For Africa he gives figures to prove the conclusive evidence of this. In 1876 this continent was 10,8% colonised. By 1900 90,4% of its territory had fallen under the control of the colonial powers.

The native capitalist class in the

colonial countries evolved late onto the scene of history. This class proved too weak to accomplish the tasks bestowed upon it: the development of industry, the unifying of a national market, the creation of a nation state free of imperialist domination and the ending of feudal land relations. Instead, as with the Irish capitalist class, they slavishly lowered the fence to imperialism.

The nation states and 'nations' which exist in the colonial world did not evolve in the manner of the West, where capitalism grew from its roots and an indigenous bourgeoisie developed to put itself (sometimes reluctantly) at the head of the nation.

Rather they were brought into being as a result of the imperialist conquest and division of the world, their boundaries cutting across the living bodies of tribes and peoples. The nation states of Africa and most of Asia are caricatures of the advanced capitalist states. Within them they contain tribal, religious and national minorities which have never been assimilated.

The manner of their formation plus now a complete economic impasse, gives a sharp sting to the national question in all these areas.

In the West, and in the Stalinist states—especially Yugoslavia, but also Russia—national antagonisms

leading to secessionist movements in the long run, threaten the existence of present-day nation states. If the working class of, for example, Spain do not succeed over a period in overthrowing capitalism and creating a socialist Spain, there exists the possibility that Spain and the Iberian peninsula could disintegrate.

Such a nightmarish scenario, which could only emerge after a long period of defeats for the working class, is already an immediate danger in many colonial countries.

India

India, both a nation state and a subcontinent containing many nationalities and seething with national revolt, provides a vivid illustration of what capitalism means in terms of irreconcilable national conflict in the colonial countries.

After almost four decades of independence, and despite some industrial development, India remains as backward and underdeveloped relative to the advanced industrial powers as it was under the Raj.

Over half the population subsist below the official poverty line. A

measure of the incapacity of the Indian bourgeoisie is the fact that even the sense of Indian national identity which existed before 1947 has all but disappeared.

On a capitalist basis there can be no genuinely united India.

Already two new states, each with its own problems of nationalities within it, have emerged. Pakistan, formed at the time of partition, itself gave birth to Bangladesh after a bitter secessionist struggle in 1971. Within India, and in Pakistan, there is the basis for further disintegration, further national subdivision.

Throughout the colonial world capitalism has come to mean an endless succession of wars between states, revolts within states, struggles for secession, the dismantling of existing boundaries and the formation of new states no more stable than those from which they emerged.

This, and the distorted forms which the colonial revolution has taken over recent decades, is the penalty which the masses in these countries are being made to pay for the failure of the leadership of the working class movement, especially the failure of Stalinism, to seize the opportunities it has had to implement the socialist solution as did the Bolsheviks in 1917.

All this is a crushing refutation of



India: nationalist agitation by Sikhs outside the Golden Temple, Amritsar, in Punjab.

those who dangle in front of the colonial masses the 'strategy' of two stages.

First, they say, solve the national problem, remove imperialism, create an independent democratic republic and only then begin the struggle for socialism. But nowhere, in fact, can these tasks be carried out without a social revolution to overthrow capitalism.

The 'two-stage' theory was the theory of the Mensheviks in Russia, who sought to hold back the struggle of the working class for socialism, while propping up through an 'alliance' a treacherous and reactionary bourgeoisie. It was the theory used by Stalin to chart the Chinese Revolution to disastrous defeat in 1925-27, and it is echoed by the Communist parties internationally today.

In Ireland it was the persuasion used by de Valera and willingly accepted by the Labour leaders to excuse their inactivity after 1918. Today it is advanced by Sinn Fein, and by the many allegedly 'Marxist' sects who have hopelessly capitulated to nationalism in Ireland.

Yet the history of the colonial countries, especially since imperialism was forced to withdraw from direct military domination after World War II, reduced this theory to ashes.

In 1950 the colonial countries had 33% of world trade. By the late 1970s, despite independence, they had 20%. The colonial world is now more closely bound than ever to the advanced capitalist countries. The national question is unresolved and, unless capitalism and landlordism is overthrown, will intensify.

Working class

As the Russian Revolution demonstrated, it is only the working class who can resolve the national problem. The working class are the only class capable of carrying out the national democratic tasks—the historical tasks of the bourgeois revolution—wherever these have not been accomplished. In doing so, as happened in Russia, the working class will immediately move to the accomplishment of socialist tasks, to the taking over of industry and to the building of socialism not only on a

national, but also necessarily on an international plane.

In the colonial countries only the working class can carry out the national democratic tasks, while in the advanced countries it is only the working class who can ultimately prevent the break-up of nation states and, through the socialist transformation of society, build upon the gains of the bourgeois revolutions of one, two or even more centuries ago. This is how things stand today.

Lenin referred to Tsarist Russia as a prison house of nationalities. Without the understanding of the Bolsheviks of the national question and without the programme which they put forward, the Russian revolution could not have been accomplished.

As Lenin explained, and it would be well remembered now with regard to Ireland, socialists are not nationalists but internationalists. Nationalism is, in fact, a poison in that it clouds the consciousness of workers, making them feel that they are separate, different and masking their common international identity of interest.

Purpose

In formulating a programme on the national question the purpose of Marxism is to reduce the influence of nationalism. Every national demand must be, in Lenin's words, "evaluated from the angle of the class struggle." The correct demands are those which will advance the unity of workers within a nation and internationally. Or, expressed more bluntly, the national question is subordinate to the class question.

So Lenin and the Bolsheviks implacably opposed those who argued for different workers' parties and trade unions for different nationalities and stood for one party for the workers of all Russia, irrespective of nationality. In this tradition Marxists today oppose different organisations for Basque workers as opposed to Spanish workers and in Ireland defend the 32-county unity of the trade union movement which has been preserved despite partition and despite the efforts of bigots on both sides to dismantle it.

Marxists do not advocate the crea-

tion of nations as a solution. The way out for the working class is not to be exploited by native as opposed to foreign capitalists but through the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of socialism which by its nature must be international. For the peoples of India, of the Middle East, of Europe, etc., the only way out is through socialist federation of their region as part of a world socialist federation.

Convince

In order to convince especially the more backward layers who may be tainted by nationalism, it is necessary for the working class to demonstrate that it has no interest in coercing or subjugating any national minority. That is why the workers' organisations must be the foremost fighters against all forms of oppression and for equal rights.

Very often, however, this may not be enough to convince the workers of an oppressed minority that it is in their own best interests to remain united with the majority. The only real unity is a voluntary unity.

For this reason Lenin advanced the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination, which means simply the right of a nation to separate from a state if it should so wish.

This right cannot be applied to every caste, religious or other minority, but to national minorities who occupy or could occupy a certain definable territory which could be the basis of a separate state. Marxists apply this right as it is demanded by, for example, the Basques in Spain, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Tamils in India, the Kurds in Iran, Iraq, etc.

By offering this right and permitting it to be exercised as the new revolutionary government in Russia did in relation to Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland after 1917, the purpose is to expose the nationalists, answer their lies about socialism, and draw the working class together.

To advocate the right of a nation to determine its own destiny is not to advocate that it should secede. The utopia of freedom in a new small state is a reactionary panacea put forward by petty-bourgeois nationalists. While upholding the right to secede,

Marxists in general advocate unity in one socialist state or in a federation, whichever would be appropriate and demanded by the circumstances, but with the maximum autonomy devolved to minorities in the regions so as to give them the power to administer their day to day affairs.

As Lenin explained, the Marxist programme on the national question is essentially a negative one, against national oppression, against the forcible suppression of national culture, identity and so on.

The Bolsheviks supported every struggle against national oppression but always resisted falling into the camp of the bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed nation in doing so. In Lenin's words, "but insofar as the bourgeois of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois nationalism, we stand against. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation and do not in any way condone strivings for privilege on the part of the oppressed nation."

Truth is always concrete. There is no set of universal commandments

set in stone, no timeless set of demands which are a ready-made prescription for each national problem. Rather there is the method of Marxism, of dialectical thinking and of class analysis, which can permit Marxists today to draw the correct conclusions as the Bolsheviks did in Russia.

In Ireland, as was the case in Russia and has now generally become the case even in the advanced countries, the socialist transformation of society will not be achieved unless the Marxist vanguard of the movement adopts a correct position on the national question.

Despite its relative development and geographical location, all the main features of Irish history are those of a colonial country. In general, since the defeat of the United Irish uprising of 1798, the native bourgeoisie have played no role in the struggle for independence. The nominally independent 26-county state which emerged from the defeat of the independence struggle of 1918-21 and the partition of the country, is in reality a client state of

British and now world capital.

The Southern ruling class has no interest or desire to end partition. For this reason and because of the resistance of the million Protestants in the North, the dream of right-wing nationalists of a capitalist united Ireland is a reactionary illusion. If a serious step were to be taken in this direction, the result would be civil war, a Lebanon situation and ultimately repartition.

Artificial

On the other hand the Northern state is an artificial creation which remains in existence only due to (British) government subventions which are now the equivalent of one third of its (the North's) Gross Domestic Product. The North is not a separate Protestant nation. Neither the territorial nor the cultural prerequisites for a separate Protestant nation exist. The theory of two nations, which gained a certain echo among confused intellectuals a decade ago, is now seen for what it is—a theoretical justification for Unionism (maintaining the Union of Northern Ireland with Britain).

There can be no two stages in the struggle in Ireland. Rather the national problem can only be resolved by the working class overthrowing capitalism North and South and so ending partition. The only solution is a socialist solution.

Marxists in Ireland therefore stand against sectarian division, against nationalist illusions, for the unity of the working class in the North, the unity of workers North and South and a common struggle through a single trade union body and ultimately a single political organisation, for socialism.

Partition can only be ended on a socialist basis just as the withdrawal of British troops can only be achieved by the movement of the working class in Ireland and in Britain. This has been the position of *Militant* over the fifteen years of the present troubles.

Our slogan is for a socialist united Ireland, as part of a socialist federation of Britain and Ireland, within which the right of self-determination of the Irish and indeed the Scottish and Welsh peoples would be upheld.



Mass demonstration by Irish Protestants against the agreement signed by Thatcher and Irish Prime Minister Fitzgerald to give a role to the Irish Republic in the government of Northern Ireland.

Internationally the working class have a choice between two scenarios.

There is the example of the Middle East, particularly the Lebanon, where failed revolution in the region has given way to nationalist disintegration and chaos. Lebanon has been cantonised, reduced to a myriad of warring factions. For the Lebanese people capitalism opens up

only a vista of horror without end.

Or there is the example of Russia, where the national question in 1917 was as acute as anywhere today, where only a minority of the population were Great Russians, and yet where the Bolsheviks succeeded in uniting the oppressed of all nationalities against Tsarism and against capitalism.

Today the working class internationally is infinitely stronger than in Russia in 1917. This strength, the new movements of the class to struggle, if combined with the programme of Marxism, can lead to the unity of all workers, to the creation of a world socialist federation and to the final ending of the persecution and enslavement of nationalities.

Lenin stood for unity of the working class of all national groups in one organisation

Inqaba has consistently argued for the unity of the working class, without distinction of race or language, in single industrial unions, in one union federation, in one UDF, and in building one mass ANC on a socialist program.

We are against the splitting up of the movement into separate organisations along the lines of the racial and national divisions within the South African population.

In the UDF, *Inqaba* supporters have argued against the creation or revival of organisations such as the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress as separate bodies claiming to represent the distinct 'national' interests of Indian people in the struggle.

We are for organised class unity of Indian working people together with their African and coloured brothers and sisters, as the necessary basis for liberation from apartheid and capitalism, and as the basis also for winning white workers away from allegiance to the state, into a non-racial working-class movement.

Likewise we have disagreed with the practice, for instance in the Western Cape and Transvaal, of separate coloured and African residents' associations affiliating to *separate* regional civic associations, and so on. When, not many years ago, the ANC and 'Communist' Party leadership was considering trying to revive the Coloured People's Congress, we



were opposed to that.

A full treatment of this subject would have to be done in the context of a thorough examination of the national question—in general terms and in regard to the specific features of the SA situation.

Meanwhile, however, *Inqaba* supporters have asked for help from the Editorial Board immediately to get hold of material by Lenin on the national question—on this aspect of the national question specifically—which is

very difficult to obtain inside South Africa from libraries and other sources.

The considerable erosion of censorship in the recent period, resulting in many of the works of Marx, Engels and Trotsky becoming available, has not extended to Lenin's works.

Consequently we are publishing here a brief selection of extracts from Lenin's writings, which should assist the comrades in the day-to-day argument of Marxist policy in the movement.

Lenin's writings on the national question, one of his greatest contributions to Marxism, are a treasure-chest of revolutionary insights and practical dialectics. The selection here cannot possibly do justice to his wide-ranging work in this field, which played a crucial part in the victory of Bolshevism in the Russian Revolution.

One point of explanation needs to be made, to avoid possible confusion. It concerns "the right of nations to self-determination" — that is to *secession* and the formation of their own *separate state*. This is a fundamental standpoint of Marxism in approaching the problem of an oppressed national minority which, having a more or less distinct territory where it constitutes the majority, could form a state of its own.

As Lenin explains, supporting the *right* of nations to self-determination does not necessarily mean *advocating* that a nation should choose to separate and form its own state. Very often Marxists advocate the contrary.

Furthermore, in the South African situation, because the nationally oppressed black people are the overwhelming *majority* of the country's population, and because no basis for solving the national question through geographical separation exists — indeed, splitting up South Africa is the ruling class's policy for *maintaining* white domination — it follows that the "right to self-determination" of the black people means concretely *the right to majority rule over South Africa as a whole*, with full equality for all minorities.

The guiding purpose, however, in our selection of the following extracts from Lenin's writings, has been to emphasize the *other side* of the Marxist approach to the national question — the need for the *unity* as opposed to 'national' and racial division of *the working-class movement and its organisations*, whether trade union, youth, community, political, etc.

In February 1903, Lenin wrote an article entitled "Does the Jewish proletariat need an 'independent political party'?" (*Collected Works*, vol 6, p 328.)

The General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia (known as the Bund) had been a

constituent section of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party — the party of the working class in the Tsarist Russian empire. The later Bolshevik Party developed first as a faction inside the RSDLP, which regarded itself as a Marxist party. (Lenin's references to 'Social-Democracy' at this time mean Marxism.)

The leaders of the Bund, under the influence of nationalist ideas, sought to introduce **federal** relations into the Rules of the RSDLP, and then moved to proclaim the Bund as an "independent political party" of Jewish workers.

Lenin wrote:

" 'Autonomy' under the Rules adopted in 1898 provides the Jewish working-class movement with all it needs: propaganda and agitation in Yiddish, its own literature and congresses, the right to advance separate demands to supplement a single general Social-Democratic programme and to satisfy local needs and requirements arising out of the special features of Jewish life. In everything else there must be complete fusion with the Russian proletariat, in the interests of the struggle waged by the entire proletariat of Russia. As for the fear of being 'steam-rolled' in the event of such fusion, the very nature of the case makes it groundless, since it is autonomy that is a guarantee against all 'steam-rolling' in matters pertaining specifically to the Jewish movement, while in matters pertaining to the struggle against the autocracy, the struggle against the bourgeoisie of Russia as a whole, we must act as a single and centralised militant organisation, have behind us the whole of the proletariat, without distinction of language or nationality, a proletariat whose unity is cemented by the continual joint solution of problems of theory and practice, of tactics and organisation; and we must not set up organisations that would march separately, each along its own track; we must not weaken the force of our offensive by breaking up into numerous independent political parties; we must not introduce estrangement and isolation and then have to heal an artificially implanted disease with the aid of these notorious 'federation' plasters." (p 332-3)

In an article written in May 1913, "The Working Class and the National Question" (*Collected Works*, vol 19, p 91), Lenin states:

"Russia is a motley country as far as her nationalities are concerned. Government policy, which is the policy of the landowners supported by the bourgeoisie, is steeped in Black-Hundred nationalism (*viciously reactionary chauvinism against the non-Russian minorities—editor*).

"This policy is spearheaded against the **majority** of the peoples of Russia who constitute the **majority** of her population. (*In other words, the dominant Russians made up less than half of total population—editor*.) And alongside this we have the bourgeois nationalism of other nations (Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc.), raising its head and trying to **divert** the working class from its great world-wide tasks by a national struggle or a struggle for national culture.

"The national question must be clearly considered and solved by all class-conscious workers.

"When the bourgeoisie was fighting for freedom together with the people, together with all those who labour, it stood for full freedom and equal rights for the nations...

"Today the bourgeoisie fears the workers and is seeking an alliance with ... the reactionaries ... and corrupting the workers with **nationalist** slogans.

"In our times the proletariat alone upholds the real freedom

of nations and the unity of workers of all nations.

"For different nations to live together in peace and freedom or to separate and form different states (if that is more convenient for them), a full democracy, upheld by the working class, is essential. No privileges for any nation or any one language! Not even the slightest degree of oppression or the slightest injustice in respect of a national minority—such are the principles of working-class democracy..."

But, he continues, those who possess **capital** want to keep the workers of different nationalities apart, while exploiting them in company.

"Class-conscious workers stand for **full unity** among the workers of all nations in every educational, trade union, political, etc., workers' organisation.... Let the bourgeoisie of all nations find comfort in lying phrases about national culture, national tasks, etc., etc.

"The workers will not allow themselves to be disunited by sugary speeches about national culture, or 'national-cultural autonomy'. The workers of all nations together, concertedly, uphold full freedom and complete equality of rights in organisations common to all—and that is the guarantee of genuine culture.

"The workers of the whole world are building up their own internationalist culture, which the champions of freedom and the enemies of oppression have for long been preparing. To the old world, the world of national oppression, national bickering, and national isolation the workers counterpose a new world, a world of the unity of the working people of all nations, a world in which there is no place for any privileges or for the slightest degree of oppression of man by man."

In a speech (*Collected Works*, vol 20, p 217) drafted in 1914 for a Bolshevik Deputy to the Fourth Duma, Lenin writes:

"We Social-Democrats are opposed to **all** nationalism and advocate democratic **centralism**. We are opposed to particularism, and are convinced that **all other things being equal**, big states can solve the problem of economic progress and the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie far more effectively than small states can. But we value only voluntary ties, never compulsory ties. Wherever we see **compulsory** ties between nations we, while by no means insisting that every nation must secede, do **absolutely** and emphatically insist on the **right** of every nation to political self-determination, that is, to secession.

"To insist upon, to advocate, and to recognise this **right** is to insist on the equality of nations, to refuse to recognise **compulsory** ties, to oppose all state privileges for any nation whatsoever, and to cultivate a spirit of complete class solidarity in the workers of the different nations.

"... we say: **no** privileges for **any** one nation, complete equality of nations and the unity, amalgamation of the workers of **all** nations.

"Eighteen years ago, in 1896, the International Congress of Labour and Socialist Organisations in London adopted a resolution on the national question, which indicated the only correct way to work for both the real 'popular liberties' and socialism. The resolution reads:

"This Congress declares that it stands for the full right of all nations to self-determination, and expresses its sympathy for the workers of every country now suffering under the yoke of military, national or other absolutism. This Congress calls upon

the workers of all these countries to join the ranks of the class-conscious workers of the whole world in order jointly to fight for the defeat of international capitalism and for the achievement of the aims of international Social-Democracy."

"And we, too, call for unity in the ranks of the workers of all nations in Russia, for only such unity can guarantee the equality of nations and popular liberties, and safeguard the interests of socialism." (p 222-3)

The following extract is from Lenin's 1914 article (*Collected Works* vol 20, p 289), "Corrupting the Workers with Refined Nationalism":

"The more strongly the working-class movement develops the more frantic are the attempts by the bourgeoisie and the feudalists to suppress it or break it up. Both these methods—suppression by force and disintegration by bourgeois influence—are constantly employed all over the world, in all countries, and one or another of these methods is adopted alternately by the different parties of the ruling classes.

"In Russia, particularly after 1905, when the more intelligent members of the bourgeoisie realised that brute force alone was ineffective, all sorts of 'progressive' bourgeois parties and groups have been more and more often resorting to the method of **dividing** the workers by advocating different bourgeois ideas and doctrines designed to weaken the struggle of the working class.

"One such idea is refined nationalism, which advocates the division and splitting up of the proletariat on the most plausible and specious pretexts, as for example, that of protecting the interests of 'national culture', 'national autonomy, or independence', and so on, and so forth.

"The class-conscious workers fight hard against **every kind** of nationalism, both the crude, violent, Black-Hundred nationalism, and that most refined nationalism which preaches the equality of nations **together** with ... the **splitting up** of the workers' cause, the workers' organisations and the working-class movement **according to** nationality. Unlike all the varieties of the nationalist bourgeoisie, the class-conscious workers, carrying out the decisions of the (summer 1913) conference of the Marxists, stand, not only for the most complete, consistent and fully applied **equality** of nations and languages, but also for the **amalgamation** of the workers of the different nationalities in **united** proletarian organisations of every kind.

"Herein lies the fundamental distinction between the national programme of Marxism and that of any bourgeoisie, be it the most 'advanced'.

"Recognition of the equality of nations and languages is important to Marxists, not only because they are the most consistent democrats. The interests of proletarian solidarity and comradely unity in the workers' class struggle call for the fullest equality of nations with a view to removing every trace of rational distrust, estrangement, suspicion and enmity. And full equality implies the repudiation of all privileges for any one language and the recognition of the **right** of self-determination for all nations.

"To the bourgeoisie, however, the demand for national equality very often amounts in practice to advocating national exclusiveness and chauvinism; they very often couple it with **advocacy** of the division and estrangement of nations. This is **absolutely** incompatible with the proletarian **internationalism**, which advocates, not only **closer relations** between nations, but the **amalgamation** of the workers of all nationalities in a given state in **united** proletarian organisations." (p 289-90)

Trade Unions in the epoch of imperialist decay

by Leon Trotsky

The following article was found, unfinished, in Trotsky's desk after his assassination by an agent of Stalin in 1940.

It was an attempt to sum up general lessons on the role and tasks of the trade unions which emerged from the revolutionary struggles of the 1920s and 1930s, both in the imperialist and the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The defeats of the working-class movement at that time, and the triumph of fascism in much of Europe, had barred the road to the socialist transformation of society and opened the way instead to the Second World War, in which more than 100 million perished.

Today the economic power of the capitalist class is concentrated, even more than was the case then, in the huge 'multi-national' monopolies and banks, which dominate economic and political life in the advanced capitalist countries and the 'Third World' alike. About 500 monopolies control, directly or indirectly, 90% of capitalist world trade.

More than when Trotsky wrote this article, they attempt to exert domination over the workers' organisations by bringing the trade unions under the control of the state.

The present world crisis of capitalism makes this need of the bosses ever more urgent. Trotsky here shows that trade unions can escape the remorseless pressure of the monopolies and the state only by consciously becoming instruments of the revolutionary struggle of the working class for socialism.

The article also underlines, in its theoretical argument, the exceptional importance of the struggle waged by black workers in South Africa for the complete independence of their unions from the state, and for democratic workers' control of these organisations.

The conclusions drawn by Trotsky are vital for trade unions throughout Africa and internationally.

Readers should, however, bear in mind the historical changes which have taken place since Trotsky wrote this article, and should look for the essential lessons in this material rather than taking each statement mechanically.

For example, such has been the development of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries since the Second World War, and such the shift in the underlying balance of class forces in favour of the working class, that no military-police dictatorship exists today in Western Europe despite the chronic crisis of capitalism that has set in. The ruling class has to move with extreme



caution towards Bonapartist (outright dictatorial) methods of rule, for fear of provoking civil war with the working class which it could not be sure to win.

It would now require a series of shattering defeats of the workers' organisations before conditions would once again exist for actual military-police dictatorships in these countries. Moreover, there is now no question of the triumph of fascism in this epoch. Trotsky's remarks about totalitarianism and fascism must be read in their historical context.

Finally, the Fourth International pioneered by Trotsky never developed, but after his death and in the post-War epoch degenerated into swarms of squabbling petty-bourgeois sects all equally falsely claiming the mantle of 'Trotskyism'. The genuine ideas and heritage of Marxism and of Trotsky survive and are re-emerging today not in any so-called 'Fourth International' (of which there were 15 at the last count!) but in the development of consistent revolutionary working-class tendencies rooted within the main organisations of labour in a growing number of countries.

The point of Trotsky's concluding remarks is the need for genuine Marxist leadership and policies in the trade unions if they are to measure up to their tasks in this epoch.

There is one common feature in the development, or more correctly the degeneration, of modern trade union organisations in the entire world: it is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power. This process is equally characteristic of the neutral, the Social-Democratic, the Communist and 'anarchist' trade unions. This fact alone shows that the tendency towards 'growing together' is intrinsic not in this or that doctrine as such but derives from social conditions common for all unions.

Monopoly capitalism does not rest on competition and free private initiative but on centralised command. The capitalist cliques at the head of mighty trusts, syndicates, banking consortiums, etc., view economic life from the very same heights

as does state power; and they require at every step the collaboration of the latter. In their turn the trade unions in the most important branches of industry find themselves deprived of the possibility of profiting by the competition between the different enterprises. They have to confront a centralized capitalist adversary, intimately bound up with state power. Hence flows the need of the trade unions—insofar as they remain on reformist positions, i.e., on positions of adapting themselves to private property—to adapt themselves to the capitalist state and to contend for its co-operation.

Reformist approach to the state

In the eyes of the bureaucracy of the trade union movement the chief task lies in "freeing" the state from the embrace of capitalism, in weakening its dependence on trusts, in pulling it over to their side. This position is in complete harmony with the social position of the labour aristocracy and the labour bureaucracy, who fight for a crumb in the share of super-profits of imperialist capitalism. The labour bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the 'democratic' state how reliable and indispensable they are in peace-time and especially in times of war. By transforming the trade unions into organs of the state, fascism invents nothing new; it merely draws to their ultimate conclusion the tendencies inherent in imperialism.

Colonial and semi-colonial countries are under the sway not of native capitalism but of foreign imperialism. However, this does not weaken but on the contrary, strengthens the need of direct, daily, practical ties between the magnates of capitalism and the governments which are in essence subject to them—the governments of colonial or semi-colonial countries.

Inasmuch as imperialist capitalism creates both in colonies and semi-colonies a stratum of labour aristocracy and bureaucracy, the latter requires the support of colonial and semi-colonial governments, as protectors, patrons and sometimes, as arbitrators. This constitutes the most important social basis for the Bonapartist and semi-Bonapartist character of governments in the colonies and in backward countries generally. This likewise constitutes the basis for the dependence of reformist unions upon the state.

Semi-state institutions

In Mexico the trade unions have been transformed by law into semi-state institutions and have, in the nature of things, assumed a semi-totalitarian character. The statization of the trade unions was, according to the conception of the legislators, introduced in the interests of the workers in order to assure them an influence upon the governmental and economic life. But insofar as foreign imperialist capitalism dominates the national state and insofar as it is able, with the assistance of internal reactionary forces, to overthrow the unstable democracy and replace it with outright fascist dictatorship, to that extent the legislation relating to the trade unions can easily become a weapon in the hands of imperialist dictatorship.

Inasmuch as the chief role in backward countries is not played by national but by foreign capitalism, the national bourgeoisie occupies, in the sense of its social position, a much more minor position than corresponds with the development of industry. Inasmuch as foreign capital does not import workers but

proletarianises the native population, the national proletariat soon begins playing the most important role in the life of the country. In these conditions the national government, to the extent that it tries to show resistance to foreign capital, is compelled to a greater or lesser degree to lean on the proletariat. On the other hand, the governments of those backward countries which consider it inescapable or more profitable for themselves to march shoulder to shoulder with foreign capital, destroy the labour organisations and institute a more or less totalitarian regime.

Thus, the feebleness of the national bourgeoisie, the absence of traditions of municipal self-government, the pressure of foreign capitalism and the relatively rapid growth of the proletariat, cut the ground from under any kind of stable democratic regime. The governments of backward, i.e. colonial and semi-colonial countries, by and large assume a Bonapartist or semi-Bonapartist character; and differ from one or another in this, that some try to orient in a democratic direction, seeking support among workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship.

This likewise determines the fate of the trade unions. They either stand under the special patronage of the state or they are subjected to cruel persecution. Patronage on the part of the state is dictated by two tasks which confront it; first, to draw the working class closer thus gaining a support for resistance against excessive pretensions on the part of imperialism; and, at the same time, to discipline the workers themselves by placing them under the control of a bureaucracy.

Monopoly capitalism and the unions

Monopoly capitalism is less and less willing to reconcile itself to the independence of trade unions. It demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy who pick the crumbs from its banquet table, that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class. If that is not achieved, the labour bureaucracy is driven away and replaced by the fascists. Incidentally, all the efforts of the labour aristocracy in the service of imperialism cannot in the long run save them from destruction.

The intensification of class contradictions within each country, the intensification of antagonisms between one country and another, produce a situation in which imperialist capitalism can tolerate (i.e. up to a certain time) a reformist bureaucracy only if the latter serves directly as a petty but active stockholder of its imperialist enterprises, of its plans and programmes within the country as well as on the world arena. Social reformism must become transformed into social imperialism in order to prolong its existence, but only prolong it, and nothing more. Because along this road there is no way out in general.

Does that mean that in the epoch of imperialism independent trade unions are generally impossible? It would be fundamentally incorrect to pose the question this way. Impossible are independent or semi-independent reformist trade unions. Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions which not only are not stockholders of imperialist policy but which set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism.

In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution. In this sense the programme of transitional demands adopted by the last congress of the Fourth International is not only the programme for the activity of the party but in its fundamental features it is the programme for the activity of the trade unions.

The development of backward countries is characterised by its combined character. In other words, the last word of imperialist technology, economics, and politics is combined in these countries with traditional backwardness and primitiveness. This law can be observed in the most diverse spheres of the trade union movement. Imperialist capitalism operates here in its most cynical and naked form. It transports to virgin soil the most perfected methods of its tyrannical rule.

In the trade union movement throughout the world there is to be observed in the last period a swing to the right and the suppression of internal democracy. In England, the Minority Movement in the trade unions has been crushed (not without the assistance of Moscow); the leaders of the trade union movement are today, especially in the field of foreign policy, the obedient agents of the Conservative Party. In France there was no room for an independent existence for Stalinist trade unions; they united with the so-called anarcho-syndicalist trade unions under the leadership of Jouhaux and as a result of this unification there was a general shift of the trade union movement not to the left but to the right. The leadership of the C.G.T. is the most direct and open agency of French imperialist capitalism.

In the United States the trade union movement has passed through the most stormy history in recent years. The rise of the CIO is incontrovertible evidence of the revolutionary tendencies within the working masses. Indicative and noteworthy in the highest degree, however, is the fact that the new 'leftist' trade union organisation was no sooner founded than it fell into the steel embrace of the imperialist state. The struggle among the tops between the old federation and the new is reducible in large measure to the struggle for the sympathy and support of Roosevelt and his cabinet.

Degeneration in Spanish civil war

No less graphic, although in a different sense, is the picture of the development or the degeneration of the trade union movement in Spain. In the socialist trade unions all those leading elements which to any degree represented the independence of the trade union movement were pushed out. As regards the anarcho-syndicalist unions, they were transformed into the instrument of the bourgeois republicans; the anarcho-syndicalist leaders became conservative bourgeois ministers. The fact that this metamorphosis took place in conditions of civil war does not weaken its significance. War is the continuation of the self-same policies. It speeds up processes, exposes their basic features, destroys all that is rotten, false, equivocal and lays bare all that is essential.

The shift of the trade unions to the right was due to the sharpening of class and international contradictions. The leaders of the trade union movement sensed or understood, or were given to understand, that now was no time to play the game of opposition. Every oppositional movement within the trade union movement, especially among the tops, threatens to provoke a stormy movement of the masses and to create difficulties for national imperialism. Hence flows the swing of the trade unions to the right, and the suppression of workers' democracy within the unions. The basic feature, the swing towards the totalitarian regime, passes through the labour movement of the whole world.

We should also recall Holland, where the reformist and the trade union movement was not only a reliable prop of imperialist capitalism, but where the so-called anarcho-syndicalist organisation also was actually under the control of the imperialist government. The secretary of this organisation, Sneevliet, in

spite of his platonic sympathies for the Fourth International, was as deputy in the Dutch Parliament most concerned lest the wrath of the government descend upon his trade union organisation.

In the United States the Department of Labour with its leftist bureaucracy has as its task the subordination of the trade union movement to the democratic state and it must be said that this task has up to now been solved with some success.

Partial nationalisation

The nationalisation of railways and oil fields in Mexico has of course nothing in common with socialism. It is a measure of state capitalism in a backward country which in this way seeks to defend itself on the one hand against foreign imperialism and on the other against its own proletariat. The management of railways, oil fields, etc., through labour organisations has nothing in common with workers' control over industry, for in the essence of the matter the management is effected through the labour bureaucracy which is independent of the workers, but in return, completely dependent on the bourgeois state.

This measure on the part of the ruling class pursues the aim of disciplining the working class, making it more industrious in the service of the common interests of the state, which appear on the surface to merge with the interests of the working class itself. As a matter of fact, the whole task of the bourgeoisie consists in liquidating the trade unions as organs of the class struggle and substituting in their place the trade union bureaucracy as the organ of the leadership over the workers by the bourgeois state. In these conditions, the task of the revolutionary vanguard is to conduct a struggle for the complete independence of the trade unions and for the introduction of actual workers' control over the present union bureaucracy, which has been turned into the administration of railways, oil enterprises and so on.

* * * * *

Events of the last period (before the war) have revealed with especial clarity that anarchism, which in point of theory is always only liberalism drawn to its extremes, was, in practice, peaceful propaganda within the democratic republic, the protection of which it required. If we leave aside individual terrorist acts, etc., anarchism, as a system of mass movement and politics, presented only propaganda material under the peaceful protection of the laws. In conditions of crisis the anarchists always did the opposite of what they taught in peace time. This was pointed out by Marx himself in connection with the Paris Commune. And it was repeated on a far more colossal scale in the experience of the Spanish revolution.

Democratic unions in the old sense of the term, bodies where in the framework of one and the same mass organisation different tendencies struggled more or less freely, can no longer exist. Just as it is impossible to bring back the bourgeois-democratic state, so it is impossible to bring back the old workers' democracy. The fate of the one reflects the fate of the other. As a matter of fact, the independence of trade unions in the class sense, in their relations to the bourgeois state, can, in the present conditions, be assured only by a completely revolutionary leadership, that is, the leadership of the Fourth International. This leadership, naturally, must and can be rational and assure the unions the maximum of democracy conceivable under the present concrete conditions. But without the political leadership of the Fourth International the independence of the trade unions is impossible.

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For security reasons, fictitious names have been used by writers of articles in this issue of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*. In every case, however, care has been taken not to give a misleading impression of the background and experience of the comrade concerned. Details about writers are provided only when security considerations make this possible.

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